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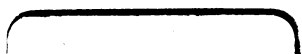
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NCM
M.F.

NORMAN.



NORMAN:

A LEGEND OF MULL.

A Poem,

IN FIVE DUANS.

BY

ROBERT C. M'FEE.

4/

GLASGOW:
JOHN HORN, PRINTER, 42 ARGYLE STREET.

1893.

To
MR. ANDREW CARNE

PITTSBURG, U.S.A.,

WHOSE SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
FREE LIBRARIES HAS GIVEN AN INTELLECTUAL AND A
LASTING BENEFIT TO THE WORKING PUBLIC, PARTICULARLY
IN THE LAND OF HIS BIRTH, AND WHOSE NAME AND
FAME IN CONSEQUENCE HAVE ACHIEVED A WORLD-WIDE
REPUTATION,

This Volume of Verse

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE it on very good authority that poetry is a drug in the market, there being so many Richmonds in the field now-a-days. Even while accepting this assurance, in the light of approximate gospel, it required all the moral fortitude I possessed to give me courage sufficient to issue this volume, and that only for private circulation.

The fact is, I had worked leisurely at "Norman" for a considerable period, changing and interchanging characters, situations, and incidents, until I realised, if I did not at once cry halt, I might go on perfecting for the natural term of my life, and with no greater satisfactory result to myself. Hence, I concluded to consider it as finished once and for all, well knowing, however, the multitude of imperfections it contains.

What I still see weak in it, others may not see; and, doubtless, what many may consider halting and imperfect, I, on the other hand, may have deemed sufficiently excellent to pass muster. It is a well-known fact that there is no accounting for tastes; no two people see alike, neither do they think alike, making differences and distinctions in many things. So wags the world, and perhaps it is good that it is so.

A critical analysis of this poem may do me good with regard to the future, but it cannot now alter the character or construction of the composition itself, since it has gone

forth for better or for worse. Again, the octosyllabic measure with which I have clothed it has been so thoroughly exploited in the past by the giants of literature, that the rhythm, whenever used since in a sustained manner, has been dubbed imitative. Thus I have been told that I have imitated. Well, if I have, is not honest imitation the sincerest form of appreciation, not to speak of flattery? I think so. And this much I do know: although I may be written down as an imitator in style, I am not a plagiarist in matter. The legend, as I read it, was of the barest description, giving ample scope to the imaginative faculty. Whether I have done the subject justice or injustice will be a matter of opinion at the best. If the poem interests the reader in its perusal, I shall feel that I have not written and published it in vain.

The different sections are entitled "Duans," in contradistinction to "Cantos," having given preference to the Gaelic term for a section or sub-section of a poem. This, at least, should commend itself to all Scotsmen and lovers of Ossian.

Many of the "Legendary Ballads and Songs" adhibited have appeared at different times in local papers, and many have not. With the exception of one short poem, entitled "The Good Queen of our Land," the entire contents are new to book form, and not to be found in my former volume.

ROBERT C. M'FEE.

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ARGUMENT.

SOMEWHERE about the middle of the seventeenth century, a Chieftain named Maclean held sway in the southern portion of the Island of Mull, in the neighbourhood of Loch Bù.

Legendary lore hath it that he summoned his kinsmen to a deer-drive on the anniversary of his child and heir's birth-day. One of the young clansmen was sent to the head of the glen to obstruct the deer's passage through the narrow defile that gave outlet only from the glen. In this he failed from some cause or other. Maclean, mad with rage, had the man whipped before the clan, and in the presence of his wife and heir. The victim, on being released, retaliated by snatching the child from the mother's arms, and running to the edge of a precipice with it. Standing in that perilous position, he threatened Maclean with the instant death of his child if he did not undergo a similar punishment to that he had just received. Maclean submitted to this indignity, and the

sequel of the poem proves that the original idea of the legend has not altogether been departed from.

The cliff or precipice is still pointed out to travellers unto this day, and is named from its connection with the tragedy.

Taking advantage of the usual poetic license, I have constructed some new characters.

I presume all legends are questionable in their nature, so I have only enlarged the occasion. The duration of time is supposed to be from "misty morn till stormy eve."

ROBERT CUMMING M'FEE.





❖ NORMAN. ❖



DUAN FIRST.



LOCH BŪY'S GLEN.

I.

THE island mists had cleared away,
And heralded the dawn of day ;
The night wind from the watery west
Had softly sighed to sullen rest ;
And o'er Loch Būy's rock-bound shore,
The listless waves, with muffled roar,
Broke with an energy, that still—
But waited Heaven's storm-gathering will,
To rear their crests of 'whelming sway,
And burst in fury o'er the bay.

B

I.

For, oft upon the shores of Mull,
A battered corpse, a shattered skull,
Tells of some vessel tempest tossed,
And wrecked upon the cruel coast :
Of drowning cries on storm wind driven,
In piteous appeal to Heaven ;
That echoing caverns, seawards cast,
To mingle with the shrieking blast.

III.

Far east, the sun's autumnal light
Had burst the bonds of nether night,
And, rolling into glorious day,
Swept all the lingering clouds away ;
While paling to a silver beam,
Before the morning's gathering gleam,
The harvest moon still hung on high,
A crescent in the western sky,
And stars reluctant twinkled through,
Like diamonds in the vaulted blue.

IV.

Adown Glen Būy's wooded land
The mountains rise on either hand,
Whose rugged peaks that pierce the air,
Are outlined, barren, bleak, and bare,
Where ne'er a bloom of heather grows,
Nor generous greensward seen ;
The bitter gales, the rains, the snows,
And mantling mists brook no repose,
To vegetation green ;

Bleached white they stand for evermore,
Like iceberg tops on Arctic shore.

V.

Man, transient man, with thoughtful eye,
Beholds such mountains kiss the sky,
 With under-girths outspread.
Earth's monuments they stand sublime,
Memorials of that age and time
 When chaos reared its head.
He views them with admiring glance,
And owns his insignificance,
As man, a breath, a cypher, he,
Compared to such immensity ;
But as a mind with boundless ken,
He soars superior again,
Dissects the ravines of the hills,
And grasps the thought such theme instils ;
Tho' 'neath their peaks he stands in awe,
He sounds the depths of Nature's law,
Evolves their history without fail,
And learns their deep, eternal tale.

VI.

The sea-fowl from their surf-bound nests,
With pinions spread, and heaving breasts,
Rose up in sweeping circles high
Athwart the Hebridean sky,
To woo the breeze, and then were gone,
Bearing away to parts unknown.
The sturdy cattle reared their heads,
And started from their grass-grown beds,

Shook from their hides the midnight dew,
And ventured off towards pastures new.
The sheep adown the distant height
Were flocking in the uncertain light ;
With nimble hoofs they gamboll'd there,
And sniffed the early mountain air,
While many a wakeful chanticleer
Piped his shrill note upon the ear,
Which, breeze-borne, seemed to melt away,
And mingle with the flowing day.

VII.

Hark! from yon ravine flanked with firs,
A whisper on the soft air stirs,
A trembling sound sweeps through the glen;
Fainter it falls, then grows again,
Till, bursting out in wild refrain,
Is heard the pibroch's swelling strain.

VIII.

Maclean, the Chieftain of the Glen,
Has summoned forth his hunting men
To meet him, as the morn comes in,
Beside that rushing, roaring linn,
Where erst a murdered warrior's wife
Dashed out her lonely widow'd life.
Ten rowan trees, so straight and slim,
Grew near that torrent's foaming brim,
Whose berries, so the gossips say,
For ten years from that fatal day
Turned black as slaes at autumn-tide
In memory of the suicide.

IX.

There gathered on that fateful morn
A kilted band of warriors, sworn
By birth and lineage to maintain
Their loyal service to Maclean.
The Highland hounds of lanky frame
That tug the leather-leash, proclaim
'Tis not for strife they gather near,
But all to hunt the bounding deer.

X.

Upon that greensward stood the man—
Maclean, the Chieftain of his clan—
Strong as an oak on mountain side,
Defiant in his haughty pride ;
His brow a massive boldness bore,
Be-furrowed like the ebbing shore ;
His shaggy eyebrows marked his race,
And seemed to shade his bearded face,
While from the orbs that 'neath them beamed,
A dark determination gleamed ;
His thin lips showed, though clad with hair,
A cruel nature slumbering there ;
The bushy locks that met the gaze
Were ruddy as the morning's blaze,
A man of iron action made,
And doubtless born to be obeyed.

XI.

Beside him was his lady fair,
A Highland maid with golden hair ;

Bright as a sunbeam shone her face,
Her faultless form was perfect grace ;
Though nurtured far from court or throne,
Sweet Marjory's gifts were all her own.
In look and gesture, smile and word,
A striking contrast to her lord.
Oft when his angry eyes would dart,
And rampant rage possess his heart,
Her smiling countenance prevailed
When every other art had failed ;
And in her sweetest language woo'd
Her husband back to gentler mood ;
Beloved by child, by maid, by man,
A guardian angel to her clan.

XII.

Her arms now held her laughing boy,
The Chieftain's heir, her dearest joy ;
Bright ringlets crowned his shapely head,
O'er which three summers had but sped.
To guide his infant mind aright
Was her fond care, her chief delight,
To make him worthy of the day
When fierce Maclean should pass away,
And he, composed of nobler mould,
Should kindly guard his Highland fold.

XIII.

How often in this vital round
Our hopes fall blighted to the ground !
How oft the fondest joy we prize
Is doomed to fade beneath our eyes !

Such is the lot that follows all—

The sting of mortal strife.

Above us hangs a funeral pall,

Unseen, but at the unknown call

It ruins in its fatal fall

Our fondest wish in life.

But now the brighter side was hers—

No cloud, no qualm of sorrow stirs

Her bosom's quietude.

She sees her kinsmen gathered there,

With gladsome hearts the sport to share,

And smiles in happiest mood ;

The rock that bore her, moss o'ergrown,

Was all in all a Highland throne.

XIV.

Two hundred brave and sturdy hearts

Had met their chief that morn,

Skilled in the chase and all its arts

That mountain life alone imparts

To mortals Highland born.

Their breasts were broad, their bodies strong,

The limbs that carried them along,

Though kilted with their home-spun frieze,

And bared in custom to the breeze,

With thews and sinews corded o'er,

Were lithe and lissom to the core,

Like sapling pines within the glen,

And fit for fray o'er hill or fen.

No arms of any kind they held,

Beyond the native dirk of eld,

That, sharp and cruel tipp'd for foes,
Found resting place within their hose.
To beat the glade and glen came they,
Maclean alone bore arms that day,
For none may kill the bounding stag

 Upon that beaten way;
'Twas theirs to double round the crag,
And chase the creatures fleet, or lag,
 Till brought at last to bay.
The sport was his, the Chieftain's own,
And he must kill, and he alone.

XV.

Than those around, no better men
Were ever reared in Highland glen ;
Proud of their home, proud of their race,
With daring stamped on every face.
In friendship : bosoms all aglow.
In enmity : a deadly foe.
There stood young Norman, keen of eye,
Of heavy build, of stature high,
Towering a giant, frank and fair,
Amid his many clansmen there.
None readier, with his heart and hand,
To help the helpless in the land ;
None readier, from insulted sense,
To lift his arm in self-defence ;
His fair locks clustering round his head,
Around his neck profusely spread,
With easy gait he stept the ground,
And held in hand the restive hound ;
First in the field at ready call
Was Norman, the beloved of all.

XVI.

A hunting air the pipers played ;
Th' impatient hounds deep-throated bayed—
Maclean stood gazing on the scene,
Self-satisfaction in his mien,
His love of hounds and hunt was keen.
A passing smile, his face avowed—
A smile from out a thundercloud.
At length he spoke, his tones were deep,
Like echoes from some donjon keep—
“ This day three years ago was born
Yon child to whom you've fealty sworn,
On dagger's point, with loyal word,
My infant heir, your future lord ;
Thus have I gathered ye around,
The manliest hearts that can be found,
By pibroch pipe, both sharp and shrill,
From island dale, from island hill,
To celebrate in huntsmen's way
This child's recurring natal day.”

XVII.

Approving shouts burst from the throng,
And echoes bore the sound along,
O'er rocks, o'er crags, through deep defiles,
With weird-like blasts for miles and miles,
Till, failing in the lower air,
They died away on hill-tops bare.
Sweet Marjory heard, and held aloft
The infant child, and kissed him oft,
Responsive to the loud acclaim
That burst from every throat,

Into her welling eyes there came
The tears of joy : this gentle dame,
Through gratitude, begot.

XVIII.

Two stags, with antlers branching wide,
Had gained the glen last eventide,
Chased thitherward by devious way
To crown the Chieftain's sport to-day;
And when they lapped at yonder brook
Full seasoned did their buttocks look ;
Their shaggy hides of russet-red
Confessed they were right royal bred.
The hillmen watched them through the night
To guard against their sudden flight
On upward path, should instinct fill
Their fancy with a fear of ill ;
And now, perchance, as morn awoke,
Behind some sheltering cliff of rock
Each rested in unkempt repose,
Nor dreaded the approach of foes.

XIX.

'Twas not to hunt o'er mountain face,
Or far afield to bear the chase ;
Within the glen their course was given,
And through it must the deer be driven,
Till closing precipices stayed
Their frantic rush to outsome glade ;
For this those men at grey-morn met,
While yet the grass with dew was wet.

XX.

An aged form now tops the hill,
And breasts the morning breezes chill—
Maclean and all his men stand still.
With faltering step, and staff-borne hand,
He labours o'er the uneven land ;
His locks and waving beard unshorn
Are white as hoar-frost in the morn ;
His very presence speaks the sage,
Thus sealed and sanctified by age,
Whose every word an import bears,
Whose guarded action ranks and shares
In manner with prophetic man,
The priestly shepherd of the clan.
He comes ;—a cloud o'erspreads his face
Of stormy thought, the outward trace
Through which the deep resolve appears,
Borne with the dignity of years.

XXI.

A boar-hound, large and lithe of limb,
Keeps reverential pace with him.
Time and again it casts a glance
Upon its master's countenance,
Then onward steps, sedate and slow,
With ears and tail depending low.
Oh ! faithful creature, oft proclaimed
The friend of man, and nobly named.
When wealth and honour take their flight,
When friendship blushes at our sight,
When hardship haunts one to the grave,
With none to succour, none to save.

Of all our friends in fortune past,
His friendship doth the longest last—
Clings to the corpse with kindly breath,
A faithful follower unto death.

XXII.

“Why, ancient Ivan, are thou here?”
The Highland Chieftain said;
“The morn is chill, the hour is drear,
The wakening hill-breeze is severe
When years bow down the head.
'Tis an imprudent venture, now,
To come abroad for such as thou.
The homely roof should be your share
Till mid-day sun hath warmed the air
And drunk the dew from bladed grass
On glen, on glade, and mountain pass
'Tis meet to nurse the age-bound brow—
Why, ancient Ivan, comest thou?”

XXIII.

The priest stood still with gleaming eye,
And lifted up his arm on high,
As typical of prophecy.
“Maclean! ye ask me how I dare
To journey forth in early air!
I left my roof, my ingle nook,
To warn you by the bell and book.
List, clansmen, to my words of dread:
A cloud hangs o'er your Chieftain's head!
Maclean, forego the chase to-day,
The fates are void of hopeful ray;

A darksome doom o'ershadows far,
And dims your infant's natal star."

XXIV.

IVAN'S VISION.

"In slumber deep, at witching round,
I saw a sight, I heard a sound ;
The heavens turned red, the earth turned black,
The welkin rang with thundrous crack,
The shafted lightnings flashed amain,
And fell across the gloom like rain.
On sudden, then, a cauldron grew
And shaped itself unto my view ;
A thousand imps of awesome form
Flew out and mingled with the storm.
They circled round the cauldron grim
And perched upon its curséd brim,
And sang a dirge I dare not tell ;
But on my ears like fate it fell,
And ever in the wild refrain
They shrieked aloud, ' Maclean ! Maclean ! '

XXV.

"The boiling blast yet brighter boiled,
Around the imps the green flames coiled ;
Still, unconcerned and unconsumed
They chanted, and as fiends they fumed
A hellish requiem for the doomed.
Three times they called upon your name ;
Three times within that cauldron came

A dark disturbance o'er the mass
That gleamed and glowed liked molten brass ;
Three times they wailed in accents weird,
And, in response, at length appeared
A form enwrapt from head to toe
With foaming liquid all aglow ;
And as it rose to higher poise,
Amid the wild unhallowed noise,
It slowly turned its face to mine,
And, Chieftain, lo ! the face was thine.

XXVI.

“ Within your arms a child you bore,
And clutched it in despair ;
The blast emburst with reek and roar,
And still you clasped the child the more—
That infant was your heir.
I gazed in terror at the sight ;
I gasped within my dream ;
The thunder loud and louder crashed,
The lightnings bright and brighter flashed
In one continuous stream.
Time ne'er shall from my soul displace
That fearful look upon your face
Within those wild alarms.
Then I divined the truth at last
Why deep despair your face o'er cast,
Your child amid the unholy blast
Was blackening in your arms.

XXVII.

“ The hellish heat its limbs had charred
Like embers in an ingle-guard ;

The infant face, with ringlets crown'd,
Though partly burned and partly brown'd,
Upturned to thee in piteous guise,
And craved your help with rendering cries.
Alas ! no help was thine to give,
The child was burnt, and thou didst live ;
The blackened form in death you prest,
And clasped it closer to your breast,
Till dry and shrunken it became,
And dropped into the under flame.
Then rose a darksome mist between,
And, like a curtain, hid the scene ;
With it my vision passed away,
And I awoke to mortal day.
I shuddered, for I knew full well
The potent power of nether hell ;
The minions of the lake below
Have coined a curse, have warped a woe,
And thus I gleaned that dark design
Was gathering o'er thee and thine.

XXVIII.

“Yet more, Maclean ! My second sight
Hath ever answered me aright.
I may not tell the fate in store,
Nor mark the doom that hovers o'er,
But looming clouds full often show
The quarter whence the storm will blow.
In haste, this morn, I left my cot
To meet you timely at this spot,
And as I urged me on my way,
I saw the omens of the day.

Three times an owl flew round my head,
Then in my path fell stiff and dead ;
A leveret rose from out its lair,
Leapt thrice before me in the air,
And, panged by some unhallowed will,
It dropped before me stark and still,
While, ere it gasped its latest breath,
Its limbs had turned as black as death.
Those signs predict a fateful blast :
Forego the chase till it hath passed ;
Thus fully warned art thou, Maclean,
And Ivan never warns in vain."

XXIX.

Hushed stood the listening clansmen round,
Nor muscle moved, nor made a sound ;
The priest's dread vision, sooth to tell,
Struck at their heart like fatal spell,
A distant murmur in the shell ;
With eager ear and earnest eye,
They hung upon Maclean's reply.

XXX.

" And hast thou come with weight of years
To vent a nightmare in mine ears ?
Your day is spent for pibrochs sound,
Your frame is frail for hunt and hound ;
So, come ye forth in selfish sort
To cast a cloud upon our sport ?
No war-cry trembles on the air,
You see no banners floating there ;

And wherefore should your haunted mind,
Be filled with dreams of devils' kind ?
Unless such means thou dost employ
To mar a sport you'll ne'er enjoy.

XXXI.

“When from the main the foemen came,
And sprang their strength 'midst fire and flame ;
Say, Ivan, was I laggard then,
Or called a coward by my men ?
The bleaching bones round Benmore show
The mercy that I dealt my foe.
Go, leave us to this day's desire ;
Go, nurse your years and feed your fire—
Repeat your prayers and count your beads,
Your paternosters and your creeds ;
Do what thou wilt, but go thy way,
And leave us to ourselves to-day.”

XXXII.

“Proud chieftain of an ancient line,
Mock not this utterance of mine ;
My dream is told, my warning given,
The rest I leave to thee and heaven.”
Slowly he turned, and with his hound
Receded o'er the rising ground.
Each gazed at other, grave and pale ;
And Marjory craved her lord
To turn him homewards from the dale ;
But little did her voice prevail—
He scorned her every word ;

And lifting up his voice, he cried—
“Let craven natures turn aside
Whose hearts are full of fear.
’Tis not a dream will baulk my way ;
I have no dread of fiend or fay ;
Resolved am I that, come what may,
This day I’ll hunt the deer.”

XXXIII.

With one acclaim the hillside rung,
“To follow” was on every tongue,
And naught should intercept,
While cheer arose on counter cheer,
And bustle grew upon the ear,
And gentle Marjory wept.
Forth Alastair, their bard of fame,
At summons from the Chieftain came,
And bore his harp along ;
To chase the priest’s weird spell away
He tuned his voice to pleasant lay,
And sang a hunting song.

ALASTAIR’S SONG.

“Dear to the heart of a huntsman born
Is the sight of a red, red deer,
As he springs through the bush,
With a rear and a rush,
And leaps o’er the streamlet near, halloo!
And leaps o’er the streamlet near.

Through the dark glen, through the glade and the hollow,
Over the mountains we follow, we follow ;
 We follow the bounding deer, halloo !
 We follow the bounding deer.

“ Fear never enters the huntsman's heart
As he crosses the roaring linn,
 Though the torrents may pour
 With a dash and a roar,
He heeds not its foaming din, halloo !
 He heeds not its foaming din.
Through the dark glen, through the glade and the hollow,
Over the mountains we follow, we follow ;
 We follow the bounding deer, halloo !
 We follow the bounding deer.

“ Tireless our limbs in the eager chase,
Breathless, perchance, though we be,
 Still we'll push on,
 Over rock, over stone,
Earnest for capture are we, halloo !
 Earnest for capture are we.
Through the dark glen, through the glade and the hollow,
Over the mountains we follow, we follow ;
 We follow the bounding deer, halloo !
 We follow the bounding deer.

“ Fortune must smile on our toil at last
The arrow hath flown from the bow,
 The deer has gone down
 With its antler'd crown,

And is panting a prey to us now, halloo !
And is panting a prey to us now.
Through the dark glen, through the glade and the hollow,
Over the mountain we follow, we follow,
We follow the bounding deer, halloo !
We follow the bounding deer."

END OF FIRST DUAN.





DUAN SECOND.



THE DWARF.

I.

IN every age and every race
Impetuous mortals loved the chase ;
When earth was young with woods and land,
Fresh from the Moulder's mighty hand,
A Nimrod poised the ready spear,
And roamed with keenest eye and ear,
Alive to all and every thrill
That nerves the huntsman's hand and will.
Across the new-born hills he walked,
Thro' virgin copse and brake he stalked
With bounding foot and eager mind
In wild pursuit of hart or hind ;
Such was his hunting fame, that it
Hath been embalmed in Holy Writ.
Hence, down the corridors of time,
The hunt was more than deemed sublime.

II.

King's breast the hill and seek the spoil,
Nor ever think the sport a toil ;

And lesser men, in every grade,
Run wanton through the forest glade;
While gentler woman's heart can yield
Enthusiasm for the field.
All flushed with deep and keen desire—
That potent unconsuming fire,
That savage joy one feels who kills.
The timid tenant of the hills.
'Twas ever thus, and so 'twill be—
The instinct rules the man,
In greater or in less degree,
Since first the world began.

III.

Loch Būy Glen's most distant mile
Converges to a deep defile,
Whose narrowest gorge, with dark cliffs crowned,
Springs sheer and sombre from the ground ;
Where half a score of men at most
Could dare the vanguard of a host,
And hand to hand, in deadly fray,
Might turn the fortunes of a day.
Befringed with furze its windings ran,
So seldom trod by foot of man ;
An earth dew hung upon the air,
Rank waved the grass and rushes there,
And spreading moss-banks, dank and green,
O'er-lapped the miry slough unseen
That sapp'd the soil and tendril's root,
And sank beneath the unwary foot—
A Highland ravine, weird and wild,
Where never sunbeam danced or smiled,

In whose recess, to venturous view,
The gloomy shadows gloomier grew.

IV.

That mountain pass, by Nature riven
In some primeval age, was given
To stalwart Norman, young and bold,
By grim Maclean, to guard and hold ;
There should he watch the live-long day,
There should he bring the stags to bay,
Whose rush-precipitate would then
Be headward bound to clear the glen,

And seek the further plain.

There should he meet the antler'd crown
In frenzied moment level'd down,

To dare the breach again—

A dangerous part, demanding skill,
The duty deftly to fulfil,
While honour claimed such clansman's heart,
Whose single hand, with practised art,
Successfully performed the part ;
For many a man his life had lost,
Done unto death at such a post.
Norman had held that narrow way,
In deer-drive on a former day,
With credit from his Chieftain too—
Full-well deserved—and thus he knew
The heart must neither faint nor fag
That dares to turn the bounding stag.

V.

“Go!” cried the Chief, “there take your stand ;
Your brawny arm, your trusty hand,

Hath oft aforetime check'd the deer
When hounded on their wild career ;
And will again, I dare to say,
For I must kill a stag to day."
Young Norman bow'd his gallant head,
And braced his loins, and would have sped,
Full of the fire, full of the zeal
'That brave bound natures always feel
 When on some mission bent
Where lurks the ominous surprise,
Where honour doubly glorifies
 The bosom's bold intent.

VI.

But ere the Chieftain's words were hushed,
From out the thickset copse there rushed
A being with as wild a mien
As mortal eye had ever seen—
A hideous dwarf, with eye-balls red,
Whose hunchback overshot his head,
Whose ill-shaped limbs forswore his race,
And mated with his twisted face.
With stealthy gait and cat-like tread
He neared Maclean and drooped his head ;
Then threw his body on the ground,
Like sordid slave or servile hound.
"How now, then, Parlane !" said the Chief,
 " Why lie ye cringing there?
Think ye that I have come to reif
Your hide-hole like a northland thief,
And chase you from your lair ?

Whate'er thou hast to say, say on,
But say it quickly and begone."

VII.

The dwarf arose, a boon to crave,
In tones sepulchral as the grave :
Said he, " I know the glen,
I know the pass, its winding way,
'Tis there the deer will head to-day
To flee your hunting men.
Yet, tho' mis-shapen in my joints,
I'll turn the fullest head of points
That ever trod the grass.
So, Chieftain, if thou but command,
I would to-day with Norman stand
To watch and ward the pass.
He may not yearn within his heart
'To share with me the valiant part,
But fain I'd help to crown the chase,
So, pray ye, Chieftain, give me place."

VIII.

Bending his trunk with awkward grace,
He fixed his blood-shot eyes
Full on young Norman's sun-browned face,
And thus approaching him apace,
He sneer'd in wicked guise.
None saw the venom'd look he sent,
Nor did divine its dark intent,
Save Norman, who, with fearless eye,
Returned the glance he dared defy.
"Thou art too generous," said he,
"I want no help from such as thee ;

My own right arm is all I ask
For the fulfilment of my task :
And should it fail me, I opine
But slight support I'd get from thine ;
I'll to my post at once, alone !
Behold, the morning hour wears on."

IX.

"Stay," cried Maclean, "nor speed away,
The hour wears on to fuller day,
I know, yet curb your sudden haste,
I grieve not at the time I waste ;
The game will surely not outrun
The rising of yon rolling sun ;
My humour bids me lend mine ear,
Let Parlane speak, and I will hear."

X.

"Weak are my words," the dwarf began,
"To plead for favours from the man—
The Chieftain of an ancient clan—
Whose will condemn'd his humble slave
To live alone in yonder cave.
By night, by day I pace the glen,
Shunn'd by my very countrymen ;
Outlaw'd thro' Norman's grief-bound tale,
With which he did your ears assail.

Even then he could not say
He saw me do that cruel deed,
To which you hastily gave heed,
And banished me that day.
He laid the guilt upon my head,
All through a blood-blush of the dead ;

I pardon him within my heart,
A brother's love had edged the dart ;
And tho' his story influenced thee,
It ne'er made murderer of me ;
And mark how I requite the ill,
To-day I proffer all my skill
To help him with my right good will."

XI.

The Chieftain for a moment stood,
And viewed the dwarf in thoughtful mood—
His mind was far away ;
He knew his utterance had sent
That being into banishment
Upon a former day.
Too well he knew that Norman then
Denounced him in the self-same glen,
And mourning o'er his sister's grave,
Claimed vengeance on the dwarfish knave.

"HELEN'S FATE."

Thrice had the bearded barley crown'd
With bursting braird the harvest ground,
Thrice had the forest shed its sheen
Of season bloom and summer green—
Since Norman laid his sister's head
Beneath the autumn flowers,
And from her grave in silence sped
To nurse his sorrowing hours.

XII.

He worshipped her ; her every care
In her short life was his to bear.

Born 'neath a star of clouded ray
Poor Helen's soul was far away.
Tho' maiden grown in simple grace
No gleam of reason lit her face ;
Her manner but bespoke the mind
For ever sealed to human kind.
Beloved by him, in time she grew
To maidenhood and beauty too ;
So sad and sweet that it would seem
She lived on through a nameless dream.
The dwarf she knew, and oft would stay
To talk with him upon the way ;
His stunted figure caught her eye
As strange, and so she needs must cry—
Weep bitter tears, time and again,
That he was not as other men ;
And thuswise, pitiful and kind,
She wandered in her errant mind.
For this he cursed her in his wrath,
And warned her ne'er to cross his path ;
Yet, tho' thus threatened and reviled,
Poor Helen all unconscious smiled.

XIII.

One night a cruel gale burst forth,
And raged in fury from the north ;
Down thro' the glen it swept amain
In thunder, lightning, and in rain.
Young Norman gained his sheltering cot
E're night the wildest weather brought ;
Weary and wet he oped his door,
And barr'd it 'gainst the storm-wind's roar,

Then called for Helen everywhere,
But never Helen answered there.
That night, alone, he searched the glen
Without the aid of other men ;
The leaden light of wakening morn
Still found him wandering lone and lorn—
In vain, alas !—for that fair form
That must have felt the midnight storm.

XIV.

At noon her mangled corpse was found
By Parlane, who was hillward bound ;
He told a tale of lies begot
And led young Norman to the spot.
Within the hollow of a rock,
Rent ages past by earthquake's shock,
Poor Helen's prostrate body lay,
Lifeless and bruised that fatal day.
Cold, cold in death her gentle face
Looked in that wild and lonely place.
Before them on the further side,
Precipitous and reaching wide,
A cliff full thirty feet on high
Hung threatening to the upturned eye.
Thus had she lost her way by night,
And fell adown the rocky height ;
So Parlane thought, and so he said,
Then shook by turns his shaggy head.

XV.

Bow'd down in soul, poor Norman knelt,
Crushed by the sudden grief he felt,

And gazed within that rock-cleft there,
On Helen's face so young and fair,
Till tears relieved his pent despair.
Descending, then, with cautious gait,
He reached her form inanimate—
That form in life to him so dear,
Now blood-stained on a rocky bier.
With reverent air and bated breath,
He kissed the icy lips in death,
And smooth'd the locks that, loosened now,
Hung o'er and hid her wounded brow,
Then towards the dwarf he turned his eyes,
Who stood above in mute disguise.
"I know you loved her not," he said,
"And oft-times may have wished her dead ;
Her simple prattle, hushed to rest,
No more will pierce your callous breast.
It is not meet that you should stay,
Naught here can claim your sympathy ;
Yet, ere you leave me, lend thine aid
To help me bear my sister-maid
Above those rocks whose jagged points
Shew cruel front to able joints,
And may the sacred act atone
For all the evil thoughts you own.
Then go ! Methinks thy presence here
Is guiltless of a kindly tear."

XVI.

The dwarf stooped low with gruesome gaze,
And touched the head he meant to raise,
When, sudden, the dead visage flushed,

And from the batter'd brow there gushed
A stream of blood yet warm !
And ere he quickly could withdraw
His sacrilegious hand, he saw
Her blood had stained his arm.
The eye of Norman caught the sign
Of dark portent, by which divine
And outraged nature thus reveals
A murderer's presence, and appeals
For retribution on the head
Thus marked by contact with the dead.
Full of revenge, the brother flew
The villain's throat to clutch :
The proof was there before his view,
His sister's blood cried out anew
At the unhallowed touch.

xvii.

Warn'd by that sign, the dwarf had known
His dangerous plight, and ere
Young Norman's eye had met his own,
From which the glare of vengeance shone
He sprang like hunted hare
Unto an overhanging ledge
Of rock that jutted there,
And standing on its utmost edge,
Defiance did declare.
Checked in his purpose at the sight,
The brother paused, as well he might ;
Tho' owning goodly build and limb,
He knew he dared not follow him ;
The dwarf, deformed from thigh to throat,
Was nimble as the mountain goat.

XVIII.

Upon that verge a boulder rude
Of ponderous proportion stood,
So equipoised in nice degree
By natural accident, that he,
Now rocking it beneath his hand,
Had fell destruction at command ;
That boulder, should he overthrow,
'Twould fall into the cleft below,
And bury, as it downwards sped,
Alike the living and the dead.
"Withhold," cried Norman, "halt in time,
And add not yet another crime
To this that signally doth bleed,
And brands you with the dastard deed."

XIX.

Loud laughed the dwarf. "I have thee, then,"
He shrieked, and rocked the stone again.
"You crave for mercy, well and good,
And yet you yearn to shed my blood,
Because the one you loved so much
Bled seemingly beneath my touch ;
Your proof is vain, and yet withal
By it the innocent might fall."
"I ask no mercy, none desire,"
Retorted Norman in his ire,
"And were I placed but here alone,
Then might ye roll that threatening stone
A thousand times on this my grave
Ere I from thee would mercy crave ;

But this fair form, so cold, so still,
Doth conquer me against my will,
And makes me seem what I am not ;
Nor can I bear the humbling thought
 It should be mangled more
Than it has been in this drear spot,
 Untombed, unshrouded o'er.
You killed her, monster, this I know,
The guilt upon your face doth shew ;
And though an angel ventured forth
To prove your innocence and worth,
My hatred, brooking no suspense,
Would damn you for your innocence ;
Name what alternative demand
Thou dost require to stay thy hand."

XX.

He ceased, and throwing back his chest,
He crossed his arms upon his breast.
Above, the rock swayed to and fro,
Impelled by his remorseless foe ;
A stronger pull, a weightier push,
And o'er the brink that rock must rush.
"Hear me," sneered Parlane, "now thou'rt done,
I'll make my terms, since I have won
In this ; for had my limbs been stiff,
My blood had stained that nether cliff—
Should I forego this forced intent
To crush you in that rock-bound rent,
Your first impulse, methinks, would be
To rush in rage and slaughter me.
So thus it stands. Which way we choose,
I've all to gain, you all to lose ;

"Twould best befit me not to spare,
But crush you both and leave you there.
Suppose I throw my chance away
What would'st thou do, what would'st thou say?
Or would my life but thee content,
Albeit I am innocent?
Speak good report before I cast
A throw that calls this hour your last!"

XXI.

Pale as the death-wraith in the sky
Stood Norman, and with fearless eye
Beheld the boulder's shadowing gloom
That, wanton urged, might soon entomb
His sister and himself, should he
Defiant in his manner be.
"Mis-shapen whelp of murd'rous mind,
And ill-begotten of your kind,
In this your craven heart appears,
You stand a captive to your fears;
Nor could your coward nerve allow
On equal terms to meet me now,
I'd tear thee thigh from thigh;
The curse of blood is on your brow,
And glitters in your eye."

XXII.

"Upbraid me not," the dwarf replied;
"Mark ye that fate is on my side—
Thy life hangs by my hand;
Thy threatening mood but keeps me here,
Existence unto me is dear,
In self-defence I stand.

Let not thy grief-grained nature rule
Thy heated brain to act the fool,
And bring destruction on thy head—
What care I tho' ye both lay dead !
Give me thy word in single breath,
As standing in the face of death,
That should I my resolve control,
And thus forbear this rock to roll
 That shadows doom for thee,
Thou wilt not raise thy 'vengeful arm
To do me future grievous harm :
 Swear this, and thou art free !”

XXIII.

Powerless the brother stood ; he knew
Full well his life was forfeit too
Should he refuse that word to give,
For Parlane dared not let him live ;
His very fear would urge him on
To crush his foe beneath that stone.
No threat from such a human fiend
Could e'er from Norman's lips have wean'd
An answer portioned to accord
With one whom he so much abhorr'd.
But there lay Helen, dead and cold,
 And there she still would lie ;
Never beneath the kindly mould,
Should he his sacred word withhold,
 And thus elect to die.
“ I swear,” he said, “ your oath I take,
For Helen's dead and martyr'd sake ;
I swear I will not strike thee dead,
But thou shalt have my curse instead,

And may it bitter measure send,
And doubly damn thee in the end."
"Curse, if thou wilt, and curse your fill,
I care not—curses never kill ;
Swear yet," the dwarf out-cried,
"Swear by the crown and heart of heaven !"
"I swear, as hopeful to be shriven,"
Young Norman thus replied ;
And conscience-stricken there he stood,
Suborned in mind, but not subdued.

XXIV.

"Thy words I take, then," Parlane said,
"And now I leave thee with thy dead ;
Since hatred dies not in a day,
I wot you wish me well away."
He left, and in his guilty heart
Experienced relief in part
That he had thus from Norman wrung
A gauge of safety from his tongue ;
Else had his cruel nature need
To countenance a double deed.
Next morning Norman told his Chief
And all the clan his greatest grief ;
And though his oath precluded harm
To Parlane from his own right arm,
Yet did he none the less declare
Him as his sister's murderer there—
No guiltless hand, he claimed, would bid
The blood to flow as Helen's did.
The Chief and clan, with one acclaim,
Denounced him with a murderer's name,

And cast him forth from kindred men,
To live and wander in the glen.

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XXV.

Tho' thrice the equinoctial breeze
Had lashed the waves and limb'd the trees
Since Helen's hapless form had been
 Consigned to common clay,
Yet was the tale of sorrow green
 In Norman's heart that day.
This cringing wretch meant little good
To venture forth in generous mood ;
His offered service sounded strange
And alien in its interchange.
The Chieftain glanced in Norman's face—
A glance that boded little grace—
"Methinks I may have done," said he,
"This dwarf injustice all through thee.
Small proof indeed had'st thou to brand
Him outcast in his native land ;
And here to-day, forgetting all
The past, he comes, and prone doth fall—
His simple wish to help the man,
Whose single word in all the clan
Condemned him, upon meagre proof,
From then, for aye, to keep aloof
From kith and kin, and live alone,
For an offence he did disown !
This act of his comes not amiss
Upon a special morn like this ;
And I will give him credit for't,
Since he has braved thy bad report.

He goes with thee ! this I command,
And thou in touch with him shall stand
At the appointed place ;
And should your jointure not avail
To turn the staggarads on their trail
You seal your own disgrace ! ”

XXVI.

Dark hung the cloud o'er Norman's brow.
Maclean's behest would not allow
Demur from those who owned his sway—
Not even from gentle Marjory ;
Her anxious eyes appeal'd in vain
Against the mandate of Maclean,
And in her spirit's wild unrest
She clasped her infant to her breast.
“ I go,” cried Norman, “ at thy will,
But better duty would fulfil
Were I alone, nor forced to bear
That hunchback's blighting presence there ;
He harbours scant regard for me,
And, Chieftain, less methinks to thee !
Once at his mercy I was placed,
And gladly would have death embraced
At his fell hand, than truce declare,
Had Helen's body lain not there ;
But now on equal terms we stand,
And since thy ruling doth demand
My forced acceptance of his aid,
I am no coward to evade
This vile infliction, and he may
Have sense sufficient to essay
A silence in my company.”

XXVII.

Girding his waist-belt as he spoke,
He scaled the intervening rock
As nimble as the fallow deer
That leaps the chasms void of fear ;
Across the torrent bounding then
He disappeared adown the glen.
The dwarf yet lingered for a pace,
With hesitancy on his face,
And further converse would have held
Had not the Chieftain's glance repelled
His utterance. " Begone," he said ;
" He whom you'd aid hath earlier sped
Before thee, therefore, stretch your limb,
Make good your speed and follow him."
Nor waited he a moment more ;
That look the Chieftain gave
Spoke volumes, as it shadow'd o'er
His rugged countenance, and bore
Portent he dared not brave.

XXVIII.

As coward scullion, menial born
He quaked beneath that glance of scorn,
And slunk away, like branded thief,
Beyond the eyeshot of the Chief.
Thro' copse and brush his pathway lay,
He cursed the thorn that crossed his way—
He Norman cursed, and on Maclean
His imprecations fell like rain—
And ere he gained his rocky lair
His eyes assumed a fiercer glare,

Where rage, where hate, and malice fell,
With all the elements of hell,
Seemed mingled measureless to nurse
The nature of a speaking curse.
He foamed at mouth, and gnashed his teeth ;
With venom'd grasp tore up the heath
And clustering moss that grew beneath,
Then threw them round him in his wrath,
As demon might on ruin's path.
Clutching a stapling young and slim
He snapped it o'er his shapeless limb,
And muttered, with a deadly hiss—
"Thus will I break my enemies.
Ha, ha," he laughed, "my generous mood
The stout-limb'd Norman well withstood,
Nor did he think that I could e'er
A kindly thought unto him bear.
I craved him company at that post—
In this I gained, in this he lost ;
I hate him in his heart and name,
As I detest my stunted frame ;
I loathe him, and the hand of fate
Hath brought him to my very gate,
Within the circle of my hate—
I should have crushed him in the hour
I had him helpless in my power.
Fool that I was ! I spared his lot,
On word of his to harm me not
With bodily 'vantage, yet he sprung
A mine upon me with his tongue,
And thus his gratitude was spent,
Accomplishing my banishment.

XXIX.

“His sister owed her tragic end
To me, yet did I never lend
My arm to cast her where she lay ;
I merely led the maid astray,
By misdirecting her the way,
When she appealed to me that night
In wandering frenzy and in fright ;
Yet well I knew the cliff was there,
And certain death would be her share.
I killed her not, unless 'tis meant
That killing's proven by intent.
My twisted frame was an offence,
She pitied me in consequence ;
For this I hated her, and so
I warned her not, but let her go.
The grim Maclean—whose scowling brow
Gave me the ready privilege now
For 'vengeful purpose—yet shall feel,
Ere long, the grudge I dare conceal.”

XXX.

“If pity dwells not in my heart,
In him I find a kindred part ;
He gave his verdict, nor demurr'd,
But cast me forth on Norman's word ;
Thus, scant affection is his share
For aught beside his infant heir ;
And this mere meed of feeling springs
From selfish pride of race that clings
Around his heart-strings, to proclaim
The boy co-owner of his name.

My life he blasted, and I'll pay
Him with a thousandfold some day :
For I have gather'd with mine eyes
Wherein the Chieftain's weakness lies.
His Marjory dreads his angry hour,
His clansmen cringe beneath his power,
And I, towards whom he would not turn
In vain dissembling to spurn,
When I shall have absolved my hate,
And deep revenge in Norman's fate,
Then shall Maclean learn that the sum
And substance of my curse hath come."
He ceased, and on the morning air
His hideous laughter trembled there ;
Each rock threw back an answering sound
Like demon echoes all around,
A fitting tribute to repay
Such murderous soliloquy.

XXXI.

Last Autumn-tide the driven deer
Had numbered half a hundred here
For similar function, and the men
Who held the pass were many then ;
But now from ailment in the stock,
Or witchment cankering the flock,
Death had been busy midst the prime
And numerous herds, ere rutting time.
For two long days the hillmen they,
With lanky hounds, had been away,
But small success befell their lot—
They brought this news of murrain-rot ;

And though they scoured the highest ground
For many weary miles around,
Two staggards only had they found.
This failure fired the Chieftain's breast—
Never too gentle at the best.
One man should guard the pass alone,
And Norman claimed it as his own—
For posts of danger to the bold
Are crowned with honours manifold ;
And what tho' Parlane claimed a share,
It cost him not a qualm or care,
He felt 'twas hatred sent him there.
Malevolence is born of spleen
Run unto seed, and lies between
The same and murder. Harbour not
The rancorous, malignant thought ;
It grows with nursing—every day
Intensifies its fatal sway—
Outwit its influence in time,
A breath of malice courts a crime !

END OF SECOND DUAN.





PUAN THIRD.



THE DEER DRIVE.

I.

BEHOLD! the rugged Western Isles
Stand forth as guardians o'er
Old Caledonia's mainland miles,
From north-bound Wrath to where the Kyles
Sweep past historical Argyll's
And Bute's romantic shore.
In wildest, weirdest grandeur, where
Can Orient Isles with them compare?
The broad Atlantic's frontage laves
Their rocky bulwarks, capes, and caves,
As time and season shall compel,
With stormy surge or summer swell;
Stern mountains rise where sea-born clouds
Cling to their girth like giant shrouds;
Deep glens divide from shore to shore,
Where restless torrents rage and roar:

Few gentle plains those islands bear—
Wild nature claims the greater share.

II.

A hardy race as ever trod
With sturdy step the virgin sod
Lived in those Isles, and till this day
Bear proofs of their heredity.
Good huntsmen they, and warriors all—
Right loyal to their Chieftain's call ;
They gathered when the war-cry sped,
And followed where his fortunes led ;
Isles of romance and letter'd lore—
Those days have fled for evermore.

III.

The early breeze with growing day
Had freshened from the glen,
And in its volume bore away,
Remote from the keen-nostril'd prey,
The scent of hunting men,
That otherwise, with windward veer,
Would have apprised their presence near.
Now, from the Chief, to upward land
The hillmen hie on either hand,
And sprightly bend the supple joint
To gain the most observing point—
On the alert to stay or start
In signal touch, and yet apart ;
Their range was keen, their range was wide,
To mark the deer on hillward stride.

IV.

The tidings come, by runner brought,
Whose stealthy step the deer had sought
With favouring wind, and tracked their slot
A mile beyond where, dense and close,
The hardy undergrowth arose.

"A primer pair of mountain stags
Ne'er bounded o'er the rocky crags ;"
So said he, and his breathless state
Proclaimed the measure of his gait.
"'Tis well," replied Maclean, "and now
Our men have reached the wooded brow,
No game shall pass their hand or eye,
Hence up the glen our course doth lie,
Where Norman must with cunning hand
Bring all we drive to final stand ;
There shall my Spanish firelock slay,
And crown the efforts of the day."

V.

Thus saying, he the weapon laid
Across his massive shoulder blade,
Well primed and charged with deadly sort,
Then swathed his garments for the sport ;
Strange engine this, his followers saw,
And held it in mysterious awe.
The arms they bore in battle strife
Were bow and bolt, or brand and knife ;
Unskilled in deadlier weapons, they
Beheld the Chieftain's with dismay.
Well knew they that, in castle tower,
He owned a hundred at that hour,

Emboss'd with silver and with gold,
And every one of Spanish mould

VI.

When Spain's "Armada," tempest driven,
On Albion's coast was wrecked and riven,
A mighty galleon, proud of sail,
Ran wild before the judgment gale—
Through Jura's sound reluctant swept,
O'er unknown course her helmsman kept,
Borne on until her luckless hull
Lay shattered on the shores of Mull.
When heaven had given the conflict o'er,
And calm succeeded storm-fiends' roar,
The galleon's timbers washed ashore ;
And wreckage thus acquired became
The clan's, by custom and by name.
Stored in the castle, cot, and cave
Was this sad harvest of the wave ;
All arms and all 'munition there
The Chieftain claimed to swell his share :
Thus came the weapon that he bore,
Owned by his ancestors of yore.

VII.

Fair Marjory sat with thoughtful face
Upon the rock in queenlike grace ;
She saw Maclean's most trusty men
With leash-bound hounds o'erspread the glen,
And burst their way the bushes thro',
Till hidden finally from view ;

Then turned she with a grief-bound sigh,
And tears bedimm'd her hazel eye.
Two rosy queens, well-formed and deft,
Had joined her since the Chieftain left,
With food their wicker baskets piled
For Marjory and infant child ;
And for their comfort also, bore
Of homespun plaids sufficient store.
"Why weep ye, mistress?" Elsa said ;
"The day is bright, the huntsmen sped,
And long ere noon sends forth its heat
A stag should lie before thy feet—
A birthday offering, fit and meet,
For thine own child, the Chieftain's heir—
Methinks 'twere better far to bear
Smiles on your cheeks, flowers in your hair.
They tell me Norman holds the pass—
We are to wed this Martinmas;
For ever since poor Helen's fate
We've been betrothed, and only wait
A mourning time of amplest due—
He loved his sister fond and true."

VIII.

"I've oft bethought me, Elsa dear,
Ye would have wed before this year :
With Norman deep affection lies,
And Norman's sorrow slowly dies.
Ye ask me why my eyes are wet
When every heart is gaily set?
Right well I know 'twere best to be
Face full of smiles, heart full of glee ;

But how can bloom on hawthorn shoot
If canker lies within the root?
My heart is sad, this day though bright
Brings visions of a boding night—
A something burdens me the while,
I feel it sacrilege to smile.
A nameless whisper fills my sigh
And tells me woe is hovering nigh ;
My thoughts run riot with my fears,
And death bells tingle in my ears.
Oh, that this day had never been !
Oh, that this hour I'd never seen !
For terror tells me I have smiled
The last upon my darling child."

IX.

Bending her head, the babe she clasped
Anew with firmer hold, and gasped,
In bitter anguish of the soul,
Tasting the qualm of dreeful dole.
Poor Elsa and her sister kept
Respectful silence each, and wept
With sympathetic fervour too,
As women and as angels do.
When the wild gush of grief that sent
The momentary tears had spent,
The ruddy Elsa, ruddier grown
From honest wail in venturous tone,
Bespoke her mistress, should she sing
The story of Bragela's King ?
No sweeter voice, on Highland hill,
Did ever native ballad trill,

In gentle love or grief's refrain,
Or ring the change in martial strain,
Than Elsa's; and, could Marjory tell,
Perhaps the song might break the spell.
She gave consent, approved the choice,
And Elsa sang in sweetest voice :—

SONG.

Bragela's King.

The white-handed daughter of Ullin is wed—
And the Lubar flows weary ;
Her mantle is green, and the sunbeam hath spread
A circle of beauty around her fair head—
And the Lubar flows weary.
Cuchullin ! Cuchullin ! thy bride for a day ;
The foemen appear, and by Lego they stray ;
The battle-mists rise—he must up and away—
And the Lubar flows weary.

He has gone in the gloom, he has gone in the night—
And the Lubar flows weary ;
His pathway is marked by the meteor's flight ;
His shield gleams and glows 'neath the green moonbeam's
And the Lubar flows weary. [light—
Cuchullin ! Cuchullin ! oh ! why art thou gone ?
Like a flash on the mountain thy bridal blush shone ;
In the halls of Temora Bragela sits lone—
And the Lubar flows weary.

In the blast of his conquest the arrow hath sped—
 And the Lubar flows weary ;
In the side of the Chief it hath buried its head ;
He sleeps 'neath the oak in his green grassy bed—
 And the Lubar flows weary.
Cuchullin ! Cuchullin ! the hundred bards sing,
The mighty have fallen by death on the wing—
Bragela mourns long for her lover and king—
 And the Lubar flows weary.

The beam of her eye has been robb'd of its light—
 And the Lubar flows weary ;
The shades of her fathers are moved at the sight
As they silently sit on the brow of the night—
 And the Lubar flows weary.
Cuchullin ! Cuchullin ! the night-wind is low ;
Bragela is wed to the murmur of woe ;
The bitter tears fall on her bosom of snow—
 And the Lubar flows weary.

x.

Her plaintive notes wound thro' the trees
Like fairy music on the breeze ;
The dying echoes, soft and calm,
Soothed like the solace of a psalm :
She ceased, and stood with folded hands,
Waiting her mistress's commands.
"The song bears sadness of its kind,
Good Elsa, but it suits my mind ;
Bragela mourned her husband slain
Midst victory upon the plain,
Yet I have naught to cause me pain,

And needs must weep, for shadows seem
To cloud my spirit like a dream.
Thou heardst not what old Ivan said ;
His vision fills my throbbing head—
The threat he threw, the sight he saw,
Hath filled me with a weirdsome awe.
'Twas but a nightmare, true, a vain
And airy fabric of the brain ;
And yet the essence of a deed
Undone, methinks, may oft precede
It's dread occurrence, giving prime
And pictured vision of a crime.
I'll bear me up against the thought—
Bragela's was a sadder lot.

XI.

Maclean and huntsmen, reaching wide,
Had swept the glen with guarded stride ;
With ardent aim and keen desire
They marked their steps thro' brush and brier,
O'er rock and stream, 'neath branch and bough,
As rugged Nature would allow ;
Then closely ranked those eager men
As they passed up the narrowing glen.
No horn was blown, for such would scare
The staggards furthward browsing there
In ignorance, that man or hound
Had closed their way to higher ground.
At length they burst upon their view,
Nor stranger sight they ever knew ;
The wider prospect now displays
Two noble creatures, in whose praise

An Ossian might have dipp'd the pen,
And failed in full description then.

XII.

Males both were they, full-spanned and fair,
Whose branching antlers swept the air ;
In width and measure, girth and mien,
A better standard ne'er were seen—
Well filled in buttock, breast and loin,
Well fashioned in their limb and groin,
And graceful in their counterpoise
As ever fell to hazard's choice,
Or made the huntsman's heart rejoice.
Where came they from? 'Twere vain to say,
Nor wot they where the herdlings lay
That owned their brute paternal sway ;
For age their bones had set and filled,
And lent a bearing to their build
Of such import to domineer
As leaders o'er the lesser deer.

XIII.

At yester-e'en they gained the glen,
Chased hither by the Chieftain's men ;
And as they saw them now, they stood
Full face to face in angry mood.
Their rage-racked eyes shone out like fire,
And told of some instinctive ire
Begot of issues in their kinds
That wild discharge in combat finds ;
Upon their breath the foam-flakes flew
Like maddened steeds when wolves pursue.

Each in defiance stood aloof
And tore the turf with nervous hoof,
Shook in the haunch, and rent the air
With bellowings of unearthly blare—
Swelling with enmity conjoint,
Until it touched the frenzy point ;
When, bearing on each other large,
They rushed upon the mutual charge
Like battering rams adversely set ;
With whelming force their frontlets met
Like spears of foemen, war provoked ;
Their antlers closed and interlocked ;
Then wrenching separate, back they flew,
And thus began the charge anew.

XIV.

No wicker warriors stood they forth—
Each averaged equal weight and worth—
On combat bent, with steaming breath,
Determined to the very death.
Perchance some hind of ambling grace,
Unwitting, that had coign'd a place
And pleasure in their amorous eyes,
Moved them to battle for the prize.
Like champion lovers in the lists,
Whose quarrel but with death desists,
Those rivals of the mountain run,
Thus dominated and undone,
Like mortals by the green-eyed one.
With visions warped and fury set,
Again and yet again they met,
Amid a shower of splinter'd horn,
With brows blood-streaming, gawed, and torn ;

While cliffs aloft and rocks alow
Resounded to each counterblow.
Mute stood Maclean and followers there,
Astonished at the wrathful pair,
For never in their hunting life
Had they beheld so strange a strife.

XV.

The glamour of the novel fight
Soon waned upon the Chieftain's sight ;
He well divined the issue, when
They both fell dead within the glen.
Such finish to their baleful feud
Seemed not to suit his native mood ;
His was the hand alone that should,
With firelock primed, the death blow plant,
And glory in the final pant. ;
This his intent, for die they must,
An offering to that birthday trust.
Fain now would he have laid them low
Did not the distance plainly shew
No missile fired with truest aim
Would ever carry to the game.
He signal gave ; the deep haloo
Rang wild and startling thro' and thro'
The glen, and quickly every hound,
Unleashed, sprang forth with agile bound,
While huntsman's horn, with vigorous note,
Pierced through the air to parts remote.
Thus, eager, all with hearts aflame,
They rushed upon the heedless game.
With sudden pause the creatures stood
A moment, and forgot their feud,

Then reared they, as with startled glance
They saw their mutual foe advance ;
As quick as thought each staggard wheels
Around, the hounds are at their heels.
With mighty bounds they break away,
Alive unto their jeopardy ;
The rushing riot in their rear
Doubly intensifies their fear ;
And vanishing from instant sight
They seek security in flight.
On ! on ! they press against the wind,
The fresh hounds following hard behind,
Heading, where-at the pass defiles,
By Norman's post two distant miles.

XVI.

When Norman, in obedience bound,
Left to assume the watchward ground,
Tho' nimble in his gait he sped
His heart felt heavier than lead.
Why should the Chieftain doubt his tale
Of Helen's tragic fate ?
And why should Parlane thus prevail
Defiant in his hate ?
He knew the Chief's unruly mind
Was reckless as the boisterous wind ;
His word was final, his command
Both law and covenant in the land ;
Opposed by none in word or deed,
Fell despotism ruled his creed,
And woe bespread the clansman's path
Who dared resist him in his wrath.

Yet Norman thought that justice still
In measure countenanced his will ;
Nor he, who voice and verdict pass'd
Against the murderer, now would cast
His lot with him in kindred part,
To outrage thus a brother's heart.
Deluded were his hopes and vain—
A callous spirit swayed Maclean.

XVII.

His young blood boiled that he should claim
A common action with the name
And nature of the man who bore
The brand of murderer evermore ;
And vow'd he, by his father's shade,
No blood-stained hand should lend its aid
To him, and give his soul the lie—
A thousand times he'd sooner die.
Thus he approached the wonted spot
That he must guard : his gloomy thought
Was pregnant with the past, and hate
Of Parlane ruled his better state.
Again he saw his sister's form,
Despoiled by death and midnight's storm ;
While he, the fiend, by sign assured,
Yet lived and breathed, life-long secured
From hand of his, nor dared he break
The vow he gave for Helen's sake,
To spare the mangled corpse that hour
He stood within the murderer's power.
Yet must he come in mocking sense,
Accredited on vain pretence,

With helping arm. Ah ! little good
Comes from the hand that's stained with blood.

XVIII.

Now for his work he must prepare
In haste, with brawny arm and bare.
With practis'd eye he scans awhile
The entrance to the deep defile ;
With measured step its width he learns,
Each favouring feature he decerns
For his advantage, to be made
The basis of a barricade :
That rear he must, with hurried hand,
The coming onset to withstand.
He oft before had raised the same,

And no one better knew
Its full accomplishment the game
To turn, when fraught with fear they came,
Intent on breaking thro'.
From 'neath his jerkin now he drew
A weapon made to hack or hew ;
Branch after branch fell to his axe,
While heavier boughs his strength would tax—
From sapling fir, from birch, from beech,
From every tree within his reach,
He struck material as inclined
To build a breastwork to his mind.

XIX.

Athwart the gap, each sapling trunk
Sufficient depth he duly sunk,
And braced the structure from behind
With branches upwardly inclined.

In front the longer boughs he placed
At intervals, that cross-wise faced
The rude erection from the ground,
And every part he withy bound,
Firm in its fixture to the eye,
And bearing partly nine feet high.
Whin, bramble-bush, and prickly brier,
He gathered to his full desire
Enough, and with a practised art
Worked them into each weaker part,
Then shook the fabric he had reared,
And firm and stable it appeared—
Of strength sufficient to withhold
The fiercest stag from mountain fold.
Yet further caution took he then,
Of withered leaves that strewed the glen,
And dry as tinder were. He made
A mound before that barricade,
Which, fired with flint-spark to a blaze
At moment opportune, would raise
A transient barrier of flame
Alone would swerve the boldest game.

XX.

Finished at last, he stood and viewed
His handiwork, and found it good ;
Surveyed in front, surveyed behind,
No point of weakness could he find.
Full satisfied he felt in heart
That he has scored a worthy part
In clansmen's estimate, and then
Relapsed to moody thought again.

Hark ! what is that ? Faint noise is heard,
As if the withered leaves, bestirred
By fitful gust, with rustling sound,
Had momentarily changed their ground.
Acute and delicate to hear
Was Norman's trained and tempered ear ;
Yet, strange to say, that noise inclined
No apprehension to his mind—
Or, if it did, he passed it o'er,
Deeming it wind and nothing more ;
Nor saw a pair of blood-shot eyes
'That moment o'er the boulders rise—
Venom in every glance held place,
And murder marked the yellow face.
'Twas Parlane's ! Like a loathèd thing,
And crawling on for fatal spring
With stealthy motion, belly-borne,
He nears the object of his scorn,
And, cursed hate, who, unaware,
Stood silent and defenceless there.
Like leaping cataract forwards driven,
Like missile from a cross-bow given,
Like wild beast on its hapless prey—
So sprang the dwarf from where he lay.

XXI.

On Norman's back the villain fell,
And bore him downwards with a yell
Of foul delight, that thrilled again
In fiendish echoes through the glen.
A grip the clammy fingers caught
Round his intended victim's throat ;

Clutched at the moment of advance,
Young Norman had but little chance
To ward such onslaught from a foe ;
So, crashing on the sward they go,
The dwarf the victor in the throw,
And wielding in his dexter hand
A glittering blade at dire command.
When Norman realised his plight,
And strangled almost, caught a sight
Of that vile visage he despised,
The dark assassin undisguised,
Whose upturned arm was holden so,
As quick to strike the fatal blow.
With sudden bound he caught the arm
Descending to his deadly harm ;
And gasping with imprison'd breath,
He held it with a grip like death.
The dwarf, with knee upon his breast,
And fingers round the throat compressed,
Seemed master of his fallen foe,
Altho' he failed to strike the blow.

XXII.

Had Parlane cunningly designed
To strike the coward blow behind,
As when he sprang with murd'rous force,
Brave Norman now had lain a corse ;
His blood had dyed the ground.
But, no ! The dwarf's malignant hate
Assumed he had as sure a fate,
And consummation found
In what he did, and as he held,
Upon the moment he excelled.

Thus throttled by the cruel grip,
And purple turned in face and lip,
Yet Norman strove with might and main
Some chance advantage to obtain ;
But all his strength seemed spent in vain,

A vice was round his throat.
Deep sank the dwarf's long fingers there
Into the flesh ; death and despair

Appeared to be his lot.
The hand that stay'd the downward blow,
Designed by his remorseless foe,
Still clenched the wrist with giant strength,
And held it up at elbow length.
So, tho' that point-directed blade
A threatening attitude essayed,
Yet never downwards could it bear ;
The grasp of Norman held it there.

XXIII.

Soon would th' unequal strife have closed
Had not kind fortune interposed
For Norman, in a way that he
Had hardly ever hoped to see.
The grip with which he did enfold
The wrist of Parlane timely told,
Whose sinews, crushed to dullest sense,
Lost power thro' partial impotence,
And 'gainst his will and self-command
The blade dropped harmless from his hand.
Young Norman saw, with eager glance,
The weapon fall—his vital chance ;
Relinquishing that wrist, he caught
The blade, that had his life besought

With frenzied action, to impart
A blow aimed at the coward's heart.
Parlane instinctively withdrew
His body as he bent,
Thus to evade the blade that flew
With 'vengeful impulse through and through
His sporran ere it spent.
That moment, with his safety taxed,
The throat-grip partly he relaxed,
And Norman breathed ; then, quick as thought,
He threw the murderer from his throat,
And springing up, with sudden bound,
Unto his feet, he grasped the hound,
And dashed him senseless to the ground.

XXIV.

Mad with the rage his bosom knew,
Again he raised, again he threw
The villain's listless body down,
Till, battered sore from heel to crown,
It lay before him on the grass
Apparently a lifeless mass.
" Monster," he gasped, " of deepest dye,
'Twere meet to slay you as you lie ;
If death hath not now glazed your eye,
And sent you to the bar of heaven,
Unpurged, unpurified, unshriven ;
Too vile to live, of darkest mind
That ever haunted humankind.
Thy purpose, born of hideous hate,
Had well-nigh sealed my earthly fate ;
Nor thought I such a hound as thou
Could'st dare as thou hast dared but now."

Deep cunning crowns the grosser mind,
And aids the action ill-designed.
The dwarf, though shook and stunned as well,
Upon the instant when he fell
Beneath the throw of Norman's arm,
Had suffered naught of actual harm ;
His sense and wit he soon regained,
But motionless he still remained—
An artful hope of safety led
Him thus to simulate the dead.

xxv.

Kicking the mass of dark deceit
That lay inert before his feet,
Young Norman turned himself away,
Intent to leave it where it lay ;
Yet, halting, and on second thought,
The dwarf within his arms he caught,
Upbore him to the branch-built-face,
Whereat it shewed its weakest place,
And cast him thro' with little grace
To rot and rankle where he lay,
Should death have claimed its own that day.
Thus meant he, but the wretch he threw
Had yet more dastard work to do :
He listless fell with smothered groan,
Alive in heart, tho' bruised in bone ;
Nor did the clansman care to know
The issue of his deadly throw.
He heard the hounds, tho' far away,
His ear had caught their hollow bay,
And well he knew the staggarads would
Be stretching on towards where he stood.

With eager eye he took his stand
Before the structure, flint in hand,
And torch, prepared the leaves to light
Whene'er the deer should come in sight ;
Thus occupied, he thought no more
Upon the wretch he worsted sore.

XXVI

The dwarf, who, thrown from Norman's grip,
Fell heavy on his shapeless hip,
With aching limbs a moment lay,
Then quietly rose and slunk away ;
The mutter'd curse upon his tongue,
The leer that o'er his forehead hung,
Betokened that his evil mind
Was still as viciously inclined.
Forward he pressed, with cautious glide,
And scanned the rocks on either side ;
The gloom spread deep, and seemed to be
A fit abode for such as he.
At length, unto his practised eye,
A deep recess yawns darkly nigh,
Bottom'd with rankest reeds and grass,
And barely wide enough to pass ;
Yet 'twixt that rock-bound rent he crushed,
And onward thro' the darkness rushed.
That path on rising gradient lay,
And never saw the light of day,
Yet well the villain knew its bent,
And scrambled on with fierce intent.
The slimy walls and floor were such
As had unnerv'd an honest touch,

Vile crawling things o'erspread the place,
And startled bats flapped in his face—
Still held he on, and upwards strove,
For hatred is as deep as love.
Within his heart the hate he bore
To Norman had increased the more,

XXVII.

Full soon a glint of glimmering day
Peer'd in upon his gloomy way,
And blushing into bolder view,
Upon the scene a glamour threw ;
The dripping roof like crystal seemed,
The pendant drops like diamonds gleamed,
And, as they fell across the light,
They dropped like jewels into night.
Even he, the dwarf of human kind,
With murder simmering in his mind,
Bathed in that bright effulgent tide
In mockery looked beatified.
No time had he to pause or gaze
Upon those weird prismatic rays ;
Wrath and revenge had full control,
And totally usurped his soul—
An errant soul, that ne'er had been
Condition'd with a moral sheen.
Up to the entrance now he crept,
The breeze across his forehead swept,
And, bleeding sore in hand and limb,
He issued from that cavern grim ;

Brushed from his face the crudish slime,
And shook him from the earthy grime
That, spattering him from foot to throat,
Clung like a curse unto his coat.

XXVIII.

The windy brow on which he stood
Was covered with a scattered wood
Of tapering firs, whose scraggy forms
Had braved the brunt of many storms ;
While here and there a trunk lay prone,
And branchless where it once had grown.
The dwarf, with ranging eye, surveyed
The bleak surroundings first, then made
With cautious step, and motion stiff,
To gain the vergement of the cliff,
From whence he saw in watchful state
The object of his lasting hate,
Young Norman, pacing to and fro,
A hundred feet at least below.
" 'Tis well," he hissed, and gnashed his teeth ;
" 'Tis well, my victim stands beneath ;
Where now he stands his corpse shall lie—
The hour is mine, and he shall die ! "
While yet he spoke, on windage borne
Away, he heard the distant horn,
And yet again familiar sounds
That told of the approaching hounds.
No one than Parlane better knew
Short time had he the deed to do,

For which thro' rock and rift he fought
To compass this commanding spot.
With gloating glance he marked his prey
On guard before the entrance way ;
Then turned he on his heel with speed
To perpetrate a vengeful deed.

XXIX.

Not twenty paces in the rear
From where the cliff fell steep and sheer,
There lay the trunk of what had been
As fair a tree as could be seen
To wave upon the hillward sight
Of such exposed and dreary height ;
A ruined remnant now it lay,
Rootless and branchless towards decay—
Snapp'd in some gale, for aught we know,
That raged a hundred years ago—
Yet owning bulk sufficient still
The dwarf's foul purpose to fulfil.
With haste a likely branch he caught
That broken lay upon the spot ;
Planting its spur to keen degree
He threw a lever on the tree
Towards the brink, and every roll
Sent damned pulses thro' his soul.
No simple effort called he forth ;
He used his strength for all 'twas worth,
For malice in an evil hour
Oft boasts a superhuman power.
The natural incline of the ground
For him a favouring factor found.

As with herculean heave, withal,
He urged it for its fatal fall.

xxx.

Nearer unto his ear was borne
The boding sound of hound and horn ;
And well he knew the hastening deer
That headed such were breasting near.
The yawning edge at last he gained ;
One powerful impulse but remained
To launch the trunk with sounding boom
To his revenge and Norman's doom !
And, as the final cast he threw,
The deer burst on his frenzied view.
No thought had Norman that the fiend
He worsted, and had not demeaned
Himself to slay, his wit should spend
In compassing such tragic end.
But Providence betimes is kind,
Though Providence betimes seems blind ;
For when it comes a shade too late
Its signature is changed to fate.
That downward bulk of blasted tree,
From murdering motive but set free,
Upon its fearful plunge swung round,
And struck the cliff with warnful sound.
Quick, glancing up, with startled glare,
Young Norman saw the danger there—
That crash to him a warning rang,
And on the instant forth he sprang,
Like mountain roe on safety bent,
Clear from the line of its descent,

And none too soon ; ere he had put
On earth again his bounding foot,
That ponderous trunk of sturdy wood
Lay quivering where he late had stood,
And in its crushing fall had made
A wreck of all his barricade.

XXXI.

Trembling in every limb, he raised
His eyes, and at the cliff he gazed ;
There, outlined 'gainst the Autumn sky,
The dwarf's dark figure met his eye,
Whose hideous face, with malice racked,
Proclaimed him author of the act.
Short space had he to think or threat
The coward cur with vengeance, yet
The barrier, reared with skilful care,
Though hurriedly, lay levelled there.
Naught had he now to turn the deer,
His fence lay low, the way was clear ;
A dozen Highlandmen could ne'er
Resist the frantic staggards there.
Yet stood he staunch, though well he knew
He dared what he could never do.
Hark ! now he hears the brushwood break,
And grasps a branch the charge to take ;
Next moment, from the thick-set wood
That fronted him from where he stood,
Burst forth two stags of royal race,
And, rushing on at whirlwind pace,
Broke o'er young Norman with a bound,
And left him bleeding on the ground.

END OF THIRD DUAN.



PUAN FOURTH.



THE PUNISHMENT.

I.

WHEN kindly reason crowns the brain,
And tones entemper'd thought,
Misfortune seldom sues in vain,
But gains some solace sought.

Oft anger in its wildest tide
Spreads desolation far and wide ;
Oft has an act of rashness born
Made happy eve a hapless morn,
For outraged equity must run
In portion 'gainst the erring one ;
Be the offence of trivial sort,
Or be it of some dark import,
Man's feelings need not be intense,
Wherewith to master the offence.

We all are formed of kindred dust,
Stirr'd by affliction's rod,
And conscience prompts us that we must
Be generous as well as just
To emulate the god.
'Tis better in our hearts to claim
The comfort cull'd from mercy's name,
Than lay that salve upon our souls
And sense, that hoodman justice doles ;
Sweet charity hath always driven
A golden nail for man in heaven.

II.

Stunn'd lay young Norman on the sward
Where lately he had held his guard ;
His bleeding brow, deep-gashed and torn,
Told of the staggar'd branching horn
That met him with resistless force,
And bore him down upon its course.
Short space unconscious he remained,
With bound his feet he soon regained,
To learn the deer hath onwards fled,
And view the baffled hounds instead ;
While eager shouts came up the glen,
Raised by the Chieftain and his men,
As, hurrying on impetuously,
They gathered in the deer to slay.
Calmly the wounded warder bore
His countenance the Chief before ;
The shouts that but a moment rung
Before, now died on every tongue,
As, gazing on the new-made breach,
They knew the deer were out of reach.

III.

Maclean approached in haughty guise,
With anger burning in his eyes ;
His brow looms like a thundercloud,
Disdain directs his footstep proud.
Well knew they that this frowning mood
To Norman boded little good ;
His cruel will when thwarted, they
Had felt on many a former day.
His passion gruesome was, and grim,
All failures were a fault with him ;
No tremor shook young Norman's frame,
His honest face was all aflame
From late exertion ; and he held
A front as brave as knight of eld
E'er bore, when captive brought within
The glance of Sultan Saladdin.
The Chief looked vengeance ere he broke
The silence ominous and spoke.

IV.

His wild words thro' the caverns rung,
As rage ran riot with his tongue.
"Caitiff," he hissed, "Curse you for aye,
For thou hast spoilt my sport to-day ;
Didst thou forget thy mission here,
And my behest ? Where are the deer ?
Hadst thou but done thy work complete,
They now had lain before my feet.
Where be they ? Gone, and long ere now
Careering o'er the mountain's brow.

And thou who should with practised hand
Have raised a fence-work to withstand
Their frenzied speed, and baulk their way,
So that they fell to me this day,
Hast failed, and in thy failure hath
Deservedly incurred my wrath.
Why didst thou not fulfil thy part ?
Speak ! ere I strike thee to the heart."

V.

With gleaming dagger raised on high,
And cruel glitter in his eye,
He moved with balanced step and slow,
As if to plant the fatal blow.
Undauntedly and undismayed
The threatened clansman stood ;
And calm the murderous glance repaid
With one of fortitude.
Wiping his wounded brow that bled,
And blinded him, he boldly said—
"Strike if thou wilt and let me die,
I do not fear your hand or eye ;
Nor had I failed upon my part,
If but my single arm and heart
Had been my stay: and yet you sent
A villain, with the vile intent
Of treachery and hideous hate,
To blast my work and plan my fate ;
His heart was fashioned to betray,
And mar the goodly sport to-day ;
My duty I have ne'er forsworn—
Do what thou wilt, thy rage I scorn."

The Chieftain paused, the upturned blade,
That ruthless Norman's life essayed,
Returned he to its leathern rest,
Then crossed his arms upon his breast.
Wild passion rack'd his madden'd brain,
And coursed thro' every corded vein,
That strung his temples as he stood,
A devil in revengeful mood.
No wolf when gloating o'er its prey,
No basilisk in wild Cathay,
Held fiercer lustre o'er its prize,
Than gleamed within the Chieftain's eyes.

VI.

His pent-up ire found speech at last,
And fell on Norman foul and fast.
"Fool that I was, to think the blow
I almost dealt thee would bestow
Such satisfaction I demand,
Or, thou deservest at my hand.
Your tale with me bears little weight,
Your vindication comes too late ;
No one who thwarts me e'er prevailed ;
Your crime has been in that you failed."
He turned, and beckoned to his men
Their near approach to speak to, when
A sound attracted every ear,
Of crackling twigs and branches near,
By some one trod adown the pass,
Whose foot had gained not yet the grass
Or yielding sward, but did proclaim
The fact before the bearer came

In view. 'Twas Parlane's figure met
The clansman's gaze, as forth he set
His crooked limbs on open space,
And eager sought the Chieftain's face.
"Hear me," he cried, with lying throat,
"I've hastened hither to this spot
To meet you, and denounce this man,
Young Norman, to his kindred clan.
Obeying thy command, I made
My way to him, thro' copse and glade ;
And as I came with proffer'd aid,
He grappled me, and choked my breath,
Belabouring me to seeming death,
Then threw me down, and curs'd was he
If he would turn the deer for thee."

VII.

"That branch-bound fence, now lying low,
Was built by me some months ago ;
But time and season surely tell,
And yesternight the fabric fell,
For, had it held till morrow shone,
The deer would now have been thine own,
With little thanks to him who now
Deceives you with his bleeding brow,
And plays the rogue in consequence.
I gave that cut in self defence,
Ere yet he threw me from his grasp
And left me to my latest gasp,
As he opined ; but silently
I drew my beaten limbs away,
And slow recovered from the shock
Within the shelter of yon rock,

Then vow'd I'd let thee know the truth
And substance of this trusty youth."
"Liar," cried Norman, in his rage,
And sprang, like wild beast from its cage
Released, upon the dwarf, whose fear,
With frenzied yell, racked every ear.
"Liar of deepest, darkest shade,
No fouler utterance ere was made ;
The very air around you cries
In tainture with such loathsome lies ;
Thy throat should burst with falsehoods packed,
Thy tongue should blister in the act ;
Thou, minion of the vilest breed,
Accurst in shape, in heart, and deed ;
I've borne with thee, and all thy hate,
I've spared thee when I held thy fate
Within my hands, and now this day
I learn thy lying treachery.
I care not how my future's cast,
This hour on earth shall be your last."

VIII.

Short shrift that day his dirk had given
The dwarf to make his peace with heaven,
Had not Maclean the act divined,
Ere scarce 'twas formed in Norman's mind.
At sudden signal from his tongue
A score of arms round Norman clung,
And stayed the downward blow that must
Have laid the hunchback in the dust ;
Worsted, the wrathful clansman stood
Surrounded thus, in maddest mood.

“Bind them,” the Chieftain hoarsely cried,
“And bear them onwards side by side
Unto our gathering ground to-day,
And I myself shall lead the way ;
‘There shall I settle with the twain
Who dared to trifle with Maclean !”
Obedient to his beck and call,
‘Tho’ heavy hearted one and all,
‘They pinioned Norman’s arms and thighs,
And bound the dwarf in similar guise ;
Then wended thro’ the shadowy glade
A miserable calvacade.
No sound, no whisper, crossed their lips,
Dead silence loom’d like an eclipse ;
He, whom they swore their fealty to,
In anger naught of mercy knew ;
And as the torrent from the hills
O’erflows its bursting bank, and fills
‘The land with ruin, so his rage
Deluged their hearts with dark presage.

IX.

O’er Marjory’s head the hours had pass’d
In dull and dreary round, since last
She watched the Chieftain and his men
Withdraw from view within the glen.
Oft, at her mistress’s command,
Had willing Elsa ta’en her stand
Upon the tallest rock that stood
In most convenient reach, and viewed
The distance far, thus to espy
The Chief’s approach with keen-set eye,

And at the earliest moment bear
The tidings to her mistress there.
Time and again her post she took ;
Time and again the same forsook,
With disappointment in her look.
Keen as her vision could survey
Within the glen that silent lay,
In further prospect naught appear'd
To tell her that the huntsmen near'd ;
While Marjory sat with mind distress'd,
Clasping her infant to her breast.
The dark presentiment of ill,
That in the morning seemed to chill
Her very soul, returned again
With deeper counter-shade, as when
The courier cloudlets of a gale
Sweep o'er the sky with darkening vail.
Then spreading thitherward is seen,
The sun-lit firmament between,
Again to gather denser form
Ere ushering th' impending storm ;
Thus Marjory's heart a vigil kept
Of weary waiting, and she wept.

X.

Hark ! on their ears a sound is borne ;
'Tis not the happy huntsman's horn
Returning from the chase elate
With gladness in his cry ;
This seems the whispering hush of fate
O'er someone sealed to die.
With mighty sigh the sound o'erhead
A moment paused, then seawards fled

Beyond the cliff that, steep and hoar,
Embounds Loch Bûy's storm-lashed shore ;
A sigh that might have issued where
The doomed lie deep in dark despair.
Pale turned the women's cheeks with fear,
Like ashen leaves in winter sere ;
Their tongues no words of utterance found—
With startled eyes they gazed around,
Expectant that some shade of ill
Would blast their beings at its will.
They looked in vain, no spectre stirr'd,
Naught but the ocean's surge they heard ;
No apparition flanked the scene,
 To claim that solemn sigh ;
'Twas gone, as it had never been,
 A warning from the sky.
Quick to the watchward rock once more
Climb'd anxious Elsa as before ;
Her eye soon marked the hunting men
Returning down the widening glen,
Hid oft where denser copsewood grew,
Then figuring again to view.
"They come but slowly on their way,"
She cried to wistful Marjory ;
"They come, and in their midst they bear
Some object that commands their care,
For aye they halt a space, and then
They ever travel on again."
"It is the deer," her mistress said ;
"Look, Elsa, doth it hang its head ?
For, hoof-bound o'er a sturdy bow,
I've seen the quarry borne ere now,
 Be-shouldered by the men -

On homeward path—this must it be ;
Good Elsa, say 'tis this you see
Approaching down the glen."

XI.

With answering shriek, poor Elsa leapt
Upon the sward, and forward crept
To where her mistress stood ;
Her startled glance had caught a sight
That filled her bosom with affright,
And boded little good.
Her sobs, her cries, alternate rung,
While unto Marjory's robe she clung,
And lowly bent her head.
"No, mistress, no," she wailed, "I swear
No stag have I beheld ; they bear
A cord-bound man instead.
I marked full well their lagging pace,
And instantly I saw the face
Of Norman in this deep disgrace—
He, whom I love, whose kindly heart
Knows no dishonourable part ;
First ever to protect the weak,
Or in the cause of justice speak,
But never known amongst the clan
For naught else but an honest man.
What has he done ? What dare they say ?
That he has countenanced to-day,
Of such unmanly bent that cries
For degradation in their eyes—
Say, mistress, say, what can this mean,
This horrid spectacle I've seen ?"

Poor Marjory's lips were sealed and dumb,
A deeper shadow seemed to come
Across her soul as Elsa spoke,
And sobs alone the silence broke ;
Waiting, they wept a tearful shower,
And trembled for the coming hour.

XII.

Soon on their sight the huntsmen burst—
Maclean, the Chieftain, striding first ;
A sullen rage of desperate dye
Held deep possession of his eye :
What rankled his unbridled mind
Was indexed on his face in kind ;
And as he stood by Marjory now
Revenge was written on his brow.
No inspiration she required
To know whatever had transpired ;
Afield that day lay in the main
Between young Norman and Maclean.
The former stood with limbs embound,
And bravely cast his gaze around,
While Elsa murmur'd, on her part,
“Naught has he done to shame my heart.”
The Chieftain halted as he met
His weeping wife, and bade her set
Her infant on the ground.
“Why do ye weep? Have you a care,”
Said he, “for that vile minion there,
Who stands before you bound?
He failed to act his part to-day,
Or dared withal to disobey
The purport of my will ;

And now the deer that should have lain
Before thy feet sweep o'er the plain,
Or hoof it up the hill.
Mark you, this youth hath failed to-day,
And he shall bear the penalty."

XIII.

"Nay, nay," she cried, "control thy rage,
And let my love thy wrath assuage,
For misadventure oft can fall
Upon the likliest of us all,
While hunted hind or slaughtered deer
Can charm not infant's eye or ear.
Unbind the clansman's limbs, and take
The generous part for mercy's sake,
For Norman never could betray
A plighted trust on any day."
She grasped his arm, and midst her fears
Besought him, thro' her sparkling tears :
Not all the tears poor Marjory shed
Could soothe the savage in him bred.
In angry terms, with action rude,
He thrust her forth from where he stood—
"Go to," he cried, "and take my child ;
He is your special care.
I'll ne'er be cozen'd nor beguil'd
By tears or woman's prayer.
See yonder dwarf with twisted limb,
Have ye no pitying words for him ?
He in like manner and like plight
Stands self-condemned within my sight ;

I'll rain my wrath on either head,
And that before the day hath fled ;
So stand ye with your women still,
And learn a lesson if ye will."

XIV.

No brighter sun had ever shone,
No better breeze had ever blown
To lend assistance in the glen
To native Chieftain and his men
In keen pursuit of hart or hind,
Than they had faced that day ;
Persistently the eastern wind
Had held propitious sway.
But now, as evening slowly near'd,
Across the heavens dark shadows rear'd ;
The sun betimes was curtained deep,
As clouds arose with widening sweep.
His wat'ry beams beribb'd the west,
And struck into the ocean's crest ;
While warnful gusts, with eerie wail,
Bespoke the gathering western gale,
That ere the hour of morning grew,
Would burst as storms in Autumn do.
A sky bespread with storm-cloud's gloom
Some strange persuasion hath
To shroud one's soul with kindred loom,
And should wild thought the reins assume,
To gorge the kindled wrath.
Maclean's resentment swell'd apace,
In words that blanched each clansman's face ;

Foul were the bitter things he said,
Fast fell his taunts o'er Norman's head,
 Who never word returned ;
Defiant in his bonds he bore
Himself, while at his bosom's core
 A quenchless passion burned.

XV.

Now on the hill a form appears,
And bearing hence his hundred years
Of winter's snow and summer's flame,
With feeble step, old Ivan came—
He who at early morn advised
 The Chieftain from the chase,
And from prophetic dream surmised
 A death and dark disgrace.
With measured step across the glen,
He neared the group of silent men ;
His long beard bleached to purest white
Waved in the breeze of threatening night,
That moaned from out the angry sky,
While deep reproof usurped his eye—
The faithful hound still held its way,
And bore its master company.
Halting at last before the clan,
He gazed upon the wrath-struck man ;
Far in his rear, yet crowding close
Upon his track, strange figures rose
Of weeping women o'er the hill,
Whose wail sent superstitious thrill
Through every heart and every vein
Of mortal there—except Maclean.

Ill brooked he this intrusion given,
And cursed them in the face of heaven ;
The Highland wail from women wrung
Is never heard on other tongue—
'Tis born of omen steeped in gloom,
And fills the soul with coming doom ;
The clansmen stood with faces pale,
And listened to the weird-like wail.

XVI.

"THE WAIL."

Woe to the house of Maclean of Loch Būy!

Woe, woe, woe !

The death-watch is shrieking, the death air is dewy—

Woe, woe, woe !

Sighs fill the air,

From the fiends of despair :

Misery, misery everywhere ;

Woe to the house of Maclean of Loch Būy—

Woe, woe, woe !

The blood-mists were spread on the grey of the morning—

Woe, woe, woe !

And the ghosts cross'd the moon with their shadowy warning—

Woe, woe, woe !

The stars twinkle green, the black skiff was seen,

There is sorrow astir where no sorrow hath been ;

Woe to the house of Maclean of Loch Būy—

Woe, woe, woe !

The dead have been spied thro' the stormy clouds riftng—

Woe, woe, woe !

A bloody sword hangs in the hall of the Chieftain—

Woe, woe, woe !

Graves open wide on the dark mountain's side ;

A death's-head was found at the turn of the tide ;

Woe to the house of Maclean of Loch Bù—

Woe, woe, woe !

The dismal dirge surceased at last,

And waned upon the fitful blast ;

On, on they came, until they stood

In certain view, a multitude

Of hooded beldames—hags of eld,

As ever mortal man beheld.

The clansmen awed, drew back a pace,

With horror stamped on every face.

Maclean looked stern, and seeming brave,

While Ivan spoke in accents grave :

“Now, Chieftain, thou hast had thy day,

And disappointment baulks thy way ;

Tempt not the fates with further wrath,

Dire danger yet waylays thy path.

Unbind your men, bid them away,

And curb your anger yet a day ;

In calmer moment you may then

Be better framed to judge those men.”

“Curse ye,” the Chieftain hiss'd with rage,

“What brings you with this equipage

Of ancient crones? Think ye to gain

A foul advantage o'er Maclean?

That thou and all thy hooded crew

With dole and dirge can never do.

No one shall e'er my purpose thwart,
Those men have not fulfilled their part,
And I'll revenge me ere the light
Of evening fades into the night—
Go, with your beldames from my sight!"

XVII.

"My beldames, Chieftain; who be they?
Alone I come to thee this day,
If thou except my trusty hound
That ever at my side is found."
Turning his head as thus he spoke,
His gaze fell on the eldritch flock
Of followers in their strange disguise,
That not till then had met his eyes.
"Leave with thy horde, while yet my hand
Is master'd by my head,
Else I may strike you where you stand,
Nor grieve to see thee dead."
"Strike if thou listeth," Ivan cried,
"My years are in the eventide;
The dusk of age hath little dread
Of death, however it be sped.
I bear no malice at your threats—
He soon forgives who soon forgets.
Take heed from one whose life-long place
Was to give counsel to your race;
Be warned before it be too late,
And guard against impending fate.
As for yon motley weird array
Of female kind I see,

I know them not, nor whither may
Their destination be."
"Thou hoary liar," howled Maclean,
"They followed thee, and their refrain
Rings now within those ears of mine,
As doubtless do they now in thine.
False prophet, down !" and as he spoke
He drew his dirk with fatal stroke,
And earthwards fell a murder'd man,
Within the presence of the clan.

XVIII.

Stunn'd stood those clansmen one and all,
And saw the lifeless body fall
Upon the sward, nor dared they move
The slightest sympathy to prove.
Their Chieftain did the dastard deed,
And grim obedience was their creed.
Poor Marjory with her maidens stood
Like carven images of wood ;
The dreadful tragedy, but past,
Had come upon them like a blast.
With the last groan the victim gave
A similar groan of deeper wave
Swept o'er the group ; then rose a yell
As if the inhabitants of hell
And all the furies of the night
Had come to gloat upon the sight.
All eyes now sought the further ground
From whence arose the woeful sound.
There stood the beldames hoodless now,
The witch-mark branded on each brow ;

With hideous clamour round they pranced
As some infernal step they danced,
And capering there upon the bank,
They ever small and smaller shrank,
Till seeming substance fainter grew,
And in the ground they sank from view ;
While, where but lately reeled the brood,
A hundred hemlock bushes stood.

XIX.

Some hearts to pity ne'er were born,
But hold their fellowmen in scorn,
Unmoved and unconcerned they glance
At suffering's inheritance ;
Nor shrinks to crush, in simplest wrath,
The man who dares to cross their path ;
O'er whom such callousness is shed,
Wealth brings the canker to a head,
Imparting power, position, place,
And breeds the tyrant of his race.
Yet, brought to book in luckless part,
Behold, a coward at the heart.
Such was the Chieftain with his own,
Nor 'mid the chiefs stood he alone—
The history of Highland strife
Marks many an ignoble life.
Strange that this Chief, so stern and wild,
Bore aught of interest for his child ;
Yet, 'twas no loving father's care,
But that he was his proudset heir,
Who yet should own his acres wide,
And thus perpetuate his pride.

Oft Chieftains' pride and Chieftains' greed
Hath made the Highland clansmen bleed.

XX.

Young Norman, twice from tortured brain,
Hissed "Coward!" at the mad Maclean,
Who heard the taunt and turned him round
To where the victims both lay bound.
Fuming, he bade the clansmen bear
Old Ivan from his sight,
And cast him forth as carrion, where
Unhallowed ghouls of earth and air
Might feast their fill by night;
While meekly followed in their train
The hound that by the corse had lain.
The Dwarf, whose face had livid grown,
Craved mercy with despairing moan.
The thought of what his fate should be
Was harrowing to such as he.
For dear release from pending dole
He would have sacrificed his soul;
While Norman, standing on the heath,
Groaned "Murderer!" beneath his teeth.
He knew the ordeal he should bear;
The sharp-thonged lash should cut the air,
And stamp the choler of Maclean
Upon his back in blood and pain.
So hoped he his insatiate foe
Would end his sufferings with a blow,
Yet, not to him the crushing thought
Of such an ignominious lot

Brought pallor that might fear proclaim,
Or tremor to his stalwart frame.

XXI.

Not far removed from where they stood
Two straggling seedlings from some wood,
Breeze borne, in earlier years once fell,
And rooted in the ground as well ;
From which two sturdy trees had sprung,
Whose tapering trunks with branches hung ;
The Chieftain's eye now rank with ire,
And glancing with a baleful fire,
Had marked their girth to aid his plan
Of vengeance upon either man.
And, thundering forth his grim commands,
The clansmen with unwilling hands
Obey'd, as might subservient hinds,
And to a tree each victim binds.
Again the 'hest of wanton will
Proclaimed the fiercer function still ;
A hundred lashes must be given
To each, with vigorous action driven,
O'er luckless shoulders now laid bare,
And bound in helpless manner there.
Poor Marjory craved remit with tears,
Her pity vanquishing her fears ;
In supplicating soul distressed,
The infant clinging to her breast ;
While Elsa wailed in woful guise,
With horror pictured in her eyes.
To view in piteous habit here
Her Norman whom she loved so dear.

Not tho' their tears shower'd down like rain,
Could they appease the wild Maclean ;
His heart surcharged with rage and hate,
Called for the lash to compensate.

XXII.

As every stripe with furrow'd mark,
Cut o'er their shoulders bare and stark,
Sprang the hot blood, and tinkling ran,
A sacrifice to cruel man.
Yet, Norman bravely held his own,
Tho' racked with pain, disdained to groan ;
Nor aught of inward suffering show,
But braced his body to each blow.
Wild throb'd his bursting brain with shame,
And red revenge his soul o'ercame ;
The maddening shadow of disgrace
Was pictured on his tortured face ;
Still bore he in his mute despair,
As hearts determined only bear.
Maclean ! Maclean ! a coming woe
Is stamped for thee in every blow,
Among the many ills that fall,
Injustice wounds the worst of all,
And leaves a gash as rough and rude
As ever did ingratitude.
The Dwarf whose coward nature spoke
In piercing shrieks at every stroke,
Clung to the trunk with frantic fears,
And craved and cursed amid his tears ;
But vainly he for pity sought—
The sullen Chieftain heard him not.

XXIII.

At length the barbarous ordeal's past,
The blood-stained thong has cut its last ;
And now, released and bleeding, they
Stand in the light of waning day.
A dangerous gleam fills Norman's eyes
As thoughts of dark dishonour rise,
And cloud his bosom like a ban,
Disgraced before his kindred clan.
Perchance young Norman's nature might
Have battled with his piteous plight,
And ventured 'gainst himself the cast—
For noble souls are hard to blast—
Had not Maclean, with sated stare,
Sneer'd at his victim standing there.
Deadly he felt this insult given,
And, quick as bolt from stormy heaven,
He sprang in dire revengeful mood
To where the callous tyrant stood ;
But e'er upon his throat he closed,
A score of clansmen interposed.
Baulked in his aim, of reason reft,
He wildly gazed from right to left ;
On Marjory's form his vision fell,
And, prompted by a breath from hell,
He at her rushed, with fury pressed,
And plucked the infant from her breast—
Then, ere a hand or arm could stay
The burst of his impetuous way,
He gained the cliff that beetling bore
Its head above Loch Būy's shore,
A full three hundred feet and more.

Assuming threatening attitude,
Upon its dizzy brink he stood.
High o'er his head the child he raised,
While round him blinding lightnings blazed,
And, with defiant yell of hate,
He dared the Chieftain to its fate.

END OF FOURTH DUAN.





PUAN FIFTH.



REVENGE.

I.

THE gentlest heart that ever throb'd,
The mildest voice that ever sobb'd,
Engenders rage insatiate,
And trembles with a nameless hate
When cruelty, with bitterest thong,
Has sear'd the sense of right and wrong.
Thus, balanced Nature racked and riven
Reeks riot in the face of heaven,
And instant impulse marks a course,
And paves the pathway to remorse.
Then woe betide, and woe bestrew
The object of such vengeful due,
Unless a higher reason weans,
Or angel-influence supervenes.

II.

Ah ! what distress, what dire dismay
Clouded the soul of Marjory.

The sudden shriek of wild despair,
That seemed to rend her bosom fair,
At Norman's act, died on the blast.
And now, with countenance aghast,
Fair arms outstretched, and bearing wild,
She cried, "Oh ! give me back my child."
Poor Elsa, with distracted mien,
Called on her lover, who had been
Her all in all, to rein his rage,
Nor add to misery's bitter page ;
But, 'mid his frenzy, counsel take,
And save the infant for her sake.
The Chieftain stood distraught and dumb,
Nor dared he nearer Norman come,
Whose madden'd eye but courted this
To plunge into the dread abyss,
While sudden judgment seemed to fall,
And chill the hearts of one and all,
Save he, the Dwarf of tortured trunk,
Whose mind in hate and malice sunk,
Grimly approved the double deed
Most imminent, that should have freed
Him of a foe, and surely slain
The pride and portion of Maclean.

III.

Now swelled young Norman's voice on high,
And fixed the Chief with piercing eye—
"Proud tyrant, thy resentful sense
Hath gloated o'er my poor offence ;
The hour, the action, then was thine,
But now the counter-blast is mine.

Right well I know the child I bear
And threaten, is thy only heir—
Vainglorious of its pedigree—
Behold its life now lies with me.
Sweet mercy claims of thee no part,
Scant love e'er glowed within thy heart ;
Self was the idol of thy day,
The altar of thy cruelty,
That lesser mortals bowed before,
And apprehended evermore.
Hark ! haughty Chieftain, I have sworn
An oath by all the stripes I've borne,
Unjustly bound to yonder tree,
That I shall be revenged on thee."

IV.

Now, 'midst the zenith of that gale,
The clansmen groan, the women wail ;
The Chieftain stands with startled brow,
As white as sea-gull's bosom now—
Nor did he move to strike the blow.
His ready dirk would oft bestow
With despot hand, in anger's tide,
When thwarted in his senseless pride.
Oh ! pride, the curse of narrow minds,
Within the tyrant bosom finds
A suited soil to root and rear
Its hideous head on high,
While adulation born of fear
Is ever ready, ever near
To swell the applauding cry.

But should deserv'd reverse await,
And pride succumb to common fate,
No meaner spectacle can claim
The tithe or title of a name.
The bulk of pride is vain pretence—
Man soaring o'er his native sense.
Maclean had pride of selfish cast ;
His power, his lineage of the past,
That loaded him with honours blind,
Enhanced in his embridled mind
The sacred unction of his name,
And added fuel to the flame.

v.

Now, what a fall to him belonged !
He stood before the man he wronged,
Whose bleeding shoulders, raw and bare,
With damning proof condemned him there,
As master of as vile a mind
That ever haunted human kind.
His child was in his victim's power,
And death yawned eager to devour,
For, 'neath that rocky cliff, the wave
Too soon might shroud a nameless grave.
Poor Marjory prayed in accents wild :
" Oh, Norman, kill not thou my child !
What has the infant done, that thou
Should'st bring destruction on him now ?
'Twas neither he nor I that sent
Thee to such cruel punishment.
I would have saved you that disgrace,
Had I found favour in his face ;

And now, should sacrifice be done,
Then let me die, but spare my son "

VI.

Thus, Norman's words came thick and fast ;
He loved the infant in the past ;
He loved him fondly even now,
And sealed a kiss upon his brow.
" But yonder man, your husband named,
Of murd'rous heart and hand proclaimed,
Who now but grimly stood alone,
And saw the lash cut to my bone---
Nor moved a muscle to abate---
'Towards him I hold a mortal hate,
Born of those stripes he needs must shower
On me to prove his wanton power.
His child I hold ; if he would save
Its beauty from a cruel grave,
And spare its life to future fame,
If heaven so wills it, with his name,
But not his nature ; let me see
The clansmen bind him to yon tree,
Then let them from his shoulders strip
The surcoat, so the blood-stained whip
That raised my flesh at every crash,
Be free to give him lash for lash.
This let him do, this let him bear,
And my disgrace in manner share,
Then I in part am reconciled,
And I will give thee back thy child.
But, if his pride perchance prevails,
Or, if his coward nature fails

To bear the brunt in similar guise,
To stand the shame the act implies ;
Then let his word the deed assign,
And seal his infant's doom with mine."

VII.

The Chieftain heard the spoken threat,
With its alternative beset;
He heard and trembled, for he knew
The man who made it meant to do.
No indecision filled the eye
Of him who thus resolved to die.
Maclean had struck a shameless hour,
Powerless he stood amidst his power.
This being whom he had despised,
And for whose fault he had devised
A rankling punishment, now bore
A stern reprisal to his door.
Small love had he for child or wife,
Pride was the loadstar of his life ;
A sordid pride of birth he held,
Belike his ancestors of eld,
Whose only meed of knowledge lay
In thinking they were better clay—
A chieftain once, a chieftain aye.
Should he, who owns such lofty name,
The worthier emotions claim,
And feel in spirit like a man
That woo'd the welfare of his clan ;
Then higher mission ne'er was given
Beneath the canopy of heaven.

But held he naught of noble birth,
He lived a scourge upon the earth.

VIII.

Stood Norman stern, stood Norman mute,
Impatient all with planted foot ;
Defiance rampant, hate ablaze
Before the Chieftain's moody gaze.
Waiting refusal, but to leap
With infant child into the deep,
Where wild the gathering storm-wind raves
O'er yawning rocks and surging waves.
Turned Marjory her wistful glance
Upon her husband's countenance
To look if he would brook disgrace,
And save the infant to his race.
Then tender'd she her shoulders fair,
And blows retributive to bear.
Not so, the Chief, and he alone,
In soul and substance must atone.
He looked and linger'd in his speech,
While Marjory did the more beseech.
Her only hope her child to gain
Lay in the answer of Maclean.
At last he op'd his lips and spoke,
Crest-fallen, and in bearing broke :
" Must thy resentment shape this course ?
And may there be no other source
Of sacrifice thou could'st employ,
And I repay, to gain this boy ?
He is my heir ; on him I lay
The fortunes of my ancestry."

“Were he a thousand times your heir,
I would not yield, I would not care,
Till thou hast paid in similar place
The utmost limit of disgrace.”

IX.

“Then be it so,” he cried ; “I bow ;
You hold his life in durance now ;
I take the stripes—prepare, ye men,
To do your office o’er again.”
Aghast they heard their Chief’s command,
Yet moved not in response a hand
To urge an act, that looked to bear
A sacrilege they shrank to share.
Slowly towards the tree he turned,
And from his side sad Marjory spurned.
“I but accept,” said he, “this shame,
To save the child to heir my name.”
As from his lips the utterance fell,
A crackling cloud as black as hell
Burst o’er his head with thundering sound,
And like an earthquake shook the ground ;
Whilst simultaneous flood of light
Robb’d, on the instant, all of sight.

X.

Anon, at length, their beam-struck eyes
Beheld an apparition rise,
Engendering shape, assuming form,
It waver’d weirdly on the storm.

'Twas Ivan's ghost, on dark intent,
Whose tangible embodiment
Lay stiffening in the outer blast,
That rung its requiem roaring past.
A pallid light of greenish hue
Illumed the spectre thro' and thro' ;
Its ghastly features more and more
A day of judgment likeness wore.
With outstretched arm it moved a pace,
'Then paused before the Chieftain's face,
And in sepulchral tones began
A censure on the murd'rous man.
"Stay, mortal, stay !" the Spirit cried,
"Nor sacrifice thy Highland pride ;
Dare not the lash with futile hope
The stern decree of doom to stop.
The hour has come, as I foretold,
The web of fate has been unrolled,
And now within its folds you stand,
While red revenge uplifts the hand.
Wert thou the lord of earth and sea—
Yea, Chief of all the chiefs that be—
Not all thy mighty pomp and power
Could turn the issue of this hour.
'This strange atonement comes too late,
For thee despair throws wide the gate ;
'The cloud has burst, the curse compiled
And naught on earth can save thy child !"

XI.

Around, the clansmen held their breath,
Shuddering before this wraith of death,

And on their Chief turned every eye
Expectantly, for his reply.
Nerving his heart to fuller rein,
With trembling tongue thus spoke Maclean :
“ I hear your words of deep portent,
Yet care but little for their bent ;
You crossed my pathway, and you dared
My dirk, that never foeman spared ;
And now your lingering shade appears
To mock me and command my fears.
Mark yonder man upon that rock,
Who holds my heir with kindred mock,
Has sworn that he shall harm it not
Should I accept the similar lot
I meted him, with wanton wage,
In the full fever of my rage ;
And thus compelled, I needs must do,
And breast the shame I never knew,
Sharing the stripes I made him bear,
To save from death my infant heir.”

XII.

“ And think ye, Chief,” the Spirit groaned,
“ My death can also be atoned,
Tho’ punishment be tenfold given
Exceeding the demand ?
Within the outraged face of heaven
A murderer you stand.
No act of thine can stay the hour,
No sacrifice within thy power
Can alter in a brief degree
The woe that is in store for thee.

Within your day you never caught
The influence of a tender thought.
Harsh as the gale thy nature grew ;
A devil was a saint to you.
And now, confronted to thy face,
With threatening death or deep disgrace,
Thou think'st submission wrung from thee
Will all-annul the fell decree
That, writ upon the scroll of fate
No penance can obliterate !
Yet ere my presence pass away
I'll see fulfilled my prophecy."

XIII.

This Norman heard, whose mad resolve
For retribution did involve
His honest word, his honest oath,
In suretyship he'd plighted both.
Now made his voice the distance pierce
Between, with passion fraught and fierce :
" Blood-service render thou Maclean,
In act and part as mine was ta'en,
And never ghost of clansman slain
By murd'rous hand of thine to-day
Fulfilment of my word shall stay.
Then, shall thine heir uninjured be
Returned to Lady Marjory's knee.
So be thy choice, on instant made,
Unbias'd by this restless shade,
Whose days of good report now last
Within the memory of the past,

Whose offices in life are done,
Within the circle of the sun ;
He hath no place in mortal part,
Nor recks the workings of my heart ;
Accept the promise I have given
Within the wrath of stormy heaven,
And to the goal at once repair,
My shame and my disgrace to share."

XIV.

So heard the Dwarf such speech expressed,
And writhed as one who was possessed ;
A dangerous and a direful scowl
Hung o'er his visage like a cowl,
That proved the current of his mind
Was bordering on the basest kind.
Now gleamed he at the Chief subdued,
Now glared he where young Norman stood ;
His tortured frame enhanced the hate
Engender'd from his outlawed state,
And blinded sense could only place
A foeman's front on every face.

XV.

With warnful look the Spirit passed
Into the bosom of the blast ;
The outline faint and fainter grew,
Till it was hid from further view—
Gone from their vision into air,
And yet, all felt it linger'd there,

Waiting, as it had said it would,
'The final finding of that feud.
Oh ! shadowy essence of the flesh,
For ever young, for ever fresh ;
Strange governante of brain and heart
That dominates our earth-born part.
Time works no change on such as thou ;
Age writes no wrinkles on thy brow ;
For while eternities shall roll,
Immortal youth will stamp the soul,
And mark a spirit vigour there,
That good and bad alike shall share.

XVI.

Now, every eye the clansmen strain
To mark the motive of Maclean.
Bound to a tree in servile state,
His heart revolted at the fate ;
Pride dared him to capitulate .
And yet he knew no other way
Of safety for his offspring lay.
'Tis hard to bite the bitter dust,
And school our nature to adjust
Itself within the meaner sphere,
That mad misfortune brings us near.
This cruel Chieftain, cold and stern,
Had such experience now to learn.
Would he that menace bold defy ?
And see his heir and infant die ?
He paused, he lingered for a space,
Despairing gazed on every face ;

No help was there, 'twas he alone
Who should in sense and self atone
For his, the act that struck despair
Into the soul of Norman there,
And sprang the mine of blackest hate,
That lash for lash must expiate.

XVII.

Old Ivan's friend, the faithful hound,
That ever by his side was found ;
That ever shared his humble lot ;
Who, when the Chieftain rudely smote
Its master with such fatal force,
Lay sentry o'er the lifeless corse,
Now plaintively began to whine
With upturned jaw—a certain sign
To every clansman standing there
That sudden death loomed on the air.
Weird and forlorn that piercing wail
Rose high above the hurrying gale,
And quaked their bosoms at the tone
That savoured of a malison.
'Tis credited to hounds to spy
The airy beings of the sky ;
Their heightened vision thus may scan
Strange secrets hid from mortal man,
And intimate by countersign
Such presence thro' a howl or whine.
And whether now this omen bore
A truthful meaning as of yore,
Its superstitious memories stirr'd,
And blanched the hearts of all who heard.

XVIII.

Unnerved in mind, unmanned in soul,
The Chieftain near'd the dreaded goal
Of his disgrace ; that bark-bound limb
Stood out as cold and drear for him
As e'er it did when Norman's frame
Unjustly clung to it in shame.
He ground his teeth in bootless ire,
And saw the thongs with eyes of fire,
That should be cross'd and counter-cross'd
To bind him to that whipping post ;
Then half turned round with palsied pant,
As if he thought him to recant :
A glance shot at the fore-doomed child
Sufficed him, he was reconciled.
" Now quickly do you part," he cries,
" Since I must serve as sacrifice."
His brawny shoulder blades were bared,
Rose Norman's voice, " Be he not spared,
And for each blow that stang my sense
Return one equally intense ;
Let him experience if he can
The sufferings of his fellow-man."

XIX.

Stood Marjory now, and Elsa lone,
And silent each as cast in stone.
She saw her child in dreadful place,
She saw her husband in disgrace,
Yet all her tears had eked away
In the first tide of her dismay.

With startled anguish now instead,
Her outraged bosom blushed and bled.
Held Norman to his perilous ground,
And saw and heard the lash rebound ;
Each cut that cracked upon the air
Must plant a pang of equal share,
And stamp its brand as deep and keen
In quivering flesh as his had been.
With careful count he told them o'er,
Until the number rose five score ;
Then shouted, " Hold ! and stand aside,
Unbind him, I am satisfied.
A further blow I would not claim,
To load you with a greater shame
Than I have borne ; now I restore
Your child, uninjured as before.

xx.

" And should for me your reckless rage
Yet further punishment presage,
I care not, Chieftain as I stand,
Strike deeply with your coward hand.
My passion's spent, my rancour run,
Since, in reproach, we now are one."
Crestfallen did Maclean, unbound,
Draw his stiff body o'er the ground
To grasp from Norman's hand that heir
For whom he suffered in despair ;
When lo ! a figure crossed his way,
With sudden rush, like beast of prey :
The Dwarf it was, whose frenzied mind
Claimed vengeance of a dreadful kind ;

With mind and body rankling sore
From all the many stripes he'd bore,
Towards that fatal cliff now flew,
'Thro' dastard purpose nerved anew ;
Wild was his piercing shriek, and strange :
"Curse ye," he cried, "I'll have revenge !"
And suiting act to curdling yell,
Full on young Norman's front he fell,
Who yet stood on the dizzy brink,
And ere a soul could speak or think,
Down, down into the dark abyss
That underlay that precipice,
To death and to destruction wild
Rolled Norman with the Dwarf and child!

XXI.

The curse had come, and all the pain
Of sacrifice wrung from Maclean
Had profited him naught to stay
The fateful hand of prophecy.
The stormy waves and rock-bound shore
Their most forbidding aspect bore.
Into that gulf where maelstrom storms—
Lost, lost beyond recall,
There mingled they, the mangled forms
Of murderer and all.
The Dwarf's resent found no relief
From such atonement of his Chief,
And panting with malignant breath,
He found revenge in kindred death.

The Chief hath paused ; the clansmen stand
Like strangers in a haunted land,
While Marjory and Elsa feel
A sorrow time can never heal.
The storm may blow its fiercest blast,
The lightnings flash both fell and fast ;
Rack ! rack ! ye elements on high,
And shake the arches of the sky ;
War with your maddest, wildest burst,
It matters not, the hour's accurst !
Long let your rolling thunders reign--
A shadow overhangs Maclean.

END OF FIFTH DUAN.



LEGENDARY BALLADS,
SONGS, &c.



LEGENDARY BALLADS, &c.



THE BALLAD OF RIGWUDDIE'S RIDE.

A LEGEND OF INVERKIP.

ANCE, on a certain Hallowe'en,
A bark cam' hame frae sea,
An' wi' sails secured, was snugly moored
At Greenock's Auld Mid Quay.

The hardy crew had pouched their due,
A' rattlin' lads an' rare,
But the blythest blade for rant or raid
Was Dan Rigwuddie there.

Wi' gran' carouse in ilka house
They drank like bounty-men,
An' blusterin' they, wi' yards o' clay,
Crossed royal yards again.

Weel primed an' dosed, the taverns closed,
As honest taverns will,
While plain to see, each glitterin' e'e
Bespoke the generous gill.

Alone at last Rigwuddie stood,
An' hiccup'd three times three :
His hame was in the Lairgs, an' should
Up-hillwards venture he ?

Fast fell the rain, loud piped the blast,
The nicht dark as the grave ;
But rum, that maketh weak the knees,
In manner maketh brave.

On wat'ry waste Dan oft had faced
A wilder blast before ;
So never he could frightened be
Wi' hurricane on shore.

An' weel he might that stormy night
Have sheltered for a spell,
Wi' cheering glass, had not his lass
Lived in the Lairgs as well.

Thus rum an' love went hand an' glove,
Defying him to stay ;
So roun' his throat he drew his coat,
An' started on his way.

The muir road's bleak, the muir road's bare,
Owre eerie land it lies,
Whaur warlocks haunt, whaur witches chaunt,
An' splore in mirkest guise.

Yet on Rigwuddie bravely trod,
An' bent against the blast,
An' syne he thocht on auld Dunrod
An' a' his cantrips past.

By dark Loch Thom he made his way,
An' thro' the lightnin's glint,
Wi' fuddled e'e he glowered tae see
The kelpies flounderin' in't.

He saw the brae that bore the stane—
"Rest an be thankfu'" ca'd—
Whaur auld Dunrod in days bygane,
Upon a broomstick by his lane,
Rode to his death—ootlawed.

That blastit brae before him lay
Sae barren an' sae bare
Its leefu' lane, for neither stane
Nor auld Dunrod was there.

Rigwuddie cocked his upper lip,
An' whustlin' started he ;
A thing he ne'er had spunk to dare
Upon the saut, saut sea.

Sae on he strode, forgot Dunrod
An' his unholy pack,
Until he got ayont the spot
Lang named the "Warl's back."

There, on his richt, that waesum nicht,
A roofless hoose he saw,
Wi' gavel-croon clean levelled doon
Beside the whinstane wa'.

Dan drew his wun'—across the grun'
Atween him an' the door--
Then stagger'd in, soaked to the skin,
Upon the hard stane floor.

Noo what a bleeze Rigwuddie sees
As ne'er before was seen,
By mortal man, in Christian lan',
On ony Hallowe'en.

A faggot fire burnt fierce an' dire,
An' roared as loud's a linn ;
Yet saw he ne'er the flash or flare
Until he steppit in.

Upon it sat a halesome pat
That boiled wi' simmerin' soun';
While wi' a switch a wizened witch
Kept steerin' hell-broth roun'.

"Come in, Rigwuddie," cried the crone,
"Ye're for the Largs, I ken,
But gif ye haud yer tongue, my lad,
Rest till the weather men'.

"Frae Inverkip the warlocks slip
To gather here, my frien',
Whaur every witch maun bile the mutch
This very Hallowe'en."

Nocht wad he speak, he vow'd ; but seek
A corner to lie doon ;
Then cursed the drink that made him think
To tramp from Greenock toon.

An' tho' nae roof bent owre his heid,
An' tho' the blast still blew,
The deil o' puff was there to snuff,
The deil a drap cam' through.

Nae sleep cam' tae Rigwuddie's een,
He likedna what he saw—
An' less he liked the hale affair
When twenty shrivelled hags an' mair
Cam' tumblin' owre the wa'.

Aroun' the pat airm's length they gat,
An' danced aboot the bleeze,
While every stump frae heel tae rump
Would crunch and crack at ilka jump,
As if they wantit grease.

They sang a lilt that would hae kilt
Anither mortal man—
But there was some Jamaica rum
Still lingering in Dan.

He never wad hae broke his neck
Tae hunt up what he saw,
But since a witness he should be,
“I'll see the warlocks damned,” quo' he,
“Before I rin awa'.”

An ill-faured witch noo took her mutch
An' cast it in the broth,
Then in a while, wi eldrecht smile,
She fished it oot the froth.

Like greasy cloot she wrung it oot
Abune the roaring fire,
Clapp'd it upon her heid, an' then
Cried "Hullo for Cantyre!"

Tae Dan's surprise an' glowerin' eyes,
Nae sooner said than done—
Afore he knew awa' she flew,
Like shot frae oot a gun.

While doon the mutch fell frae the witch
Wi' thud upon the floor,
As if it fell, he thocht himsel',
A hunner mile or more.

Thus, time aboot, till every witch
Did similar act perform,
Yelled oot the self-same countersign,
An' flew into the storm.

When a' were gane, Rigwuddie rose
An' shook his drookit skin,
Then lifted he the mutch to see
What marvel was within.

A mutch it was of ancient shape,
And of an ancient smell ;
Dan tried it on—the venturous lad—
It fitted him as if it had
Been ordered for himsel'.

The groggy punk, when haufins drunk,
Is a' that some require ;
So bold as brass, he like an ass,
Cried "Hullo for Cantyre!"

Up like a rocket frae the earth
He darted through the air,
An' deil the power had he that hour
To cry a baurley there.

An' still upon his curley pow
The mutch stuck firm an' fast ;
He rode to death, for every breath
He thocht would be his last.

Across the Lairs and Millport bays,
On through the lift he bore,
The Cumbrae an' the Garroch Heid
He left ahin' wi' lightnin' speed,
An' made for Arran shore.

When in a crack, owre Goatfell's back,
He sped at fearfu' rate ;
The weather cleared, the stars appeared,
The storm wind did abate.

Like carrier doo, on, on he flew,
Owre Hielan' hill an' mire,
Till lee an' lang he drapp'd amang
The witches at Cantyre.

There, huddled roon, wi' curse an' croon
They made the welkin ring,
An' sang a sang that brocht along
Auld Nickie Ben, their king.

He cam' wi' cloven hoof an' tail,
Wi' horns an' tallons keen ;
"Come on," quo he, "an' follow me
Whaur nane o' ye have been.

“Come owre the sea, an’ I will gie
Ye a’ a bonnie dance—
This Hallowe’en we’ll haud within
The Royal Vaults o’ France.

“There wi’ the wine o’ monarchs fine
Ye each can fill yer horn,
An’ kick yer heels wi’ jigs an’ reels
Till cockcrow i’ the morn.”

Approvin’ grunts and elbow dunts,
Their sympathies unveil—
“Lead on, Auld Nick, through thin or thick
We’ll follow at your tail.”

His red-het haffets wore a smile
That would hae burnt green shaws,
Or brocht the Gogo to the boil,
Or roasted ten-year craws.

They took their cue, an’ aff they flew
Across the channel wave,
Like howlets tae a rangdevoo—
Wi’ Dan amang the lave.

Soon in the Royal Vaults they drapp’d,
An’ then the fun began—
Rigwuddie swilled till he was filled
As fou’ as e’er was man.

He danced a hornpipe wi’ the dail,
But, being mortal clay,
He couldna stan’ Auld Nickie whan
He trampit on his tae.

"Oh, Lord ! oh, Lord !" Rigwuddie roared,
An' fell into a trance ;
While at that word the warlock horde
Flew up an' oot o' France.

An' there he lay till break o' day,
Whan a' the butlers cam'
The royal cellars to survey—
An' tak' their mornin' dram.

They woke him up wi' rug an' wrench,
They bore him to the King,
Wha swore an oath in royal French
That for a thief he'd swing.

Ootstepit then three sodger men,
A murd'rous lot tae see,
Wha led Rigwuddie there and then
Beneath the gallows tree.

The priest, a man o' many tongues,
Exhortet Dan to pray,
When sudden hope in Dan did stop
The good man's homily.

So drawing near the friar's ear,
Says he : " Most holy man,
Jist let me draw my nicht-cap on,
Then hang me when ye can."

Sma' favour 'twas tae ask frae such,
Sma' favour 'twas indeed ;
Dan from his pocket pu's the mutch,
An' draws it on his heid.

Then wi' a grin, below the chin
He chucked the holy friar,
An' throwin' up his pair o' airms,
Cried "Hullo for Cantyre!"

Before the Frenchmen could divine,
Or wink in broad daylight,
My faith they saw Dan, mutch an' a',
Flee up an' oot o' sicht.

Staunin', agape, they drapp't the rape
That should ha'e thrawn his throat,
An' mutterin' prayers 'gainst witches' snares,
'They hurried frae the spot.

Rigwuddie reached the Lairs at last,
Wi' never mair mischance,
An' lived for lang tae blaw an' blast
About his ride tae France.



THE "JACKDAW O' ST. MUNGO."

A JACKDAW perched on the steeple top,
In the gloaming;
The rain it rained with a drip and a drop,
And he trimmed his tail and he twisted his crop,
His feathers with his black bill combing.
Oh! why am I left alone? he cried;
Oh! where is my true love gone? he sigh'd;

And this ancient bird
At that moment heard
The bonnie, bonnie bells o' the Tron.

Chorus.

Dong, ding, dong, went the bells o' the Tron,
To the tune of "My Nannie's Awa'."
The bells o' the Tron, oh, the bonnie, bonnie bells,
With a dong, ding, dong, on the night air swells ;
And the jackdaw laughed ha, ha, he, he,
And the jackdaw laughed ha, ha.

He and his mate had fall'n out that day,
In the morning.
She had taken the huff and had flown away ;
He had pecked her hard, but she wouldn't stay,
His authority for ever scorning.
Farewell, farewell, you jade, he sighed ;
I'll get another mate in the glade, he cried ;
And this ancient bird
At that moment heard
The bonnie, bonnie bells o' the Tron.

Chorus.

Dong, ding, dong, went the bells o' the Tron,
To the tune o' "Craigielea."
The bells o' the Tron, oh, the bonnie, bonnie bells
With a dong, ding, dong, on the night air swells ;
And the jackdaw laughed he, he, ho, ho,
And the jackdaw laughed he, he.

Soon another jeandaw sat by his side,
 In the gloaming ;
 With a twinkle in his e'e he called her his bride,
 And he wagg'd his tail in the height of his pride,
 And vowed they would both go a-roaming ;
 I have found me another true love, he cried,
 Adieu to my faithless dove, he sighed.
 And that ancient bird
 At that moment heard
 The bonnie, bonnie bells o' the Tron.

Chorus.

Dong, ding, dong, went the bells o' the Tron,
 To "My Ain Kind Dearie, Oh."
 The bells o' the Tron, oh, the bonnie, bonnie bells,
 With a dong, ding, dong, on the night air swells ;
 And the jackdaw laughed ho, ho, ha, ha,
 And the jackdaw laughed ho, ho.

• ————— ❦ —————

ANNIVERSARY VERSES TO THE
MEMORY OF BURNS.

'Tis now a hundred years an' mair
 Since Burns, the bard o' Coila,
 Drew his first breath o' mortal air,
 Near Doon—within a mile o'.
 The gossips met, in council set,
 An' ower his loof did ponder ;
 An' there they read the lines that said,
 He'd be a world's wonder,
 Frae that same night.

Frae Galloway, the legends say,
An' ither mystic regions ;
Frae Kyle o' fame, an' Cunninghame,
The fairies cam in legions.
Syne they did flap their wings an' clap
Their rosy han's wi' pleasure ;
An' roun' his head in cradled bed
They danced a dainty measure,
For joy that night.

The Januar' wun, wi' roarin' fun,
The theekit roof did sweep ower ;
An' ilka star in cycles far
Blinked brighter than its neebor.
Thus Nature knew an' aiblins thro'
Phenomenal endearance,
'Neath kindred guise did solemnise
The poet's first appearance,
That noted night.

Nae royal grace bent ower his face,
Nae tinsel tippit crummock
Was milked wi' care and fingers fair
To regulate his stomach.
He grew apace in strength and grace,
Until the Muse she found him
On upland lea, a ploughman he,
And threw her mantle round him,
As told that night.

Poetic fire did thus inspire
His soul, as nature meant it ;
He felt the glow true poets know,
He knew that Heaven had sent it

And thus langsyne, wi' pen divine,
His fervent fancies jottin',
Ordained to live, an' pleasure give,
When royalty's forgotten,
By day an' night.

The years ran on, then oot he shone,
Fulfilled the predication :
A bard o' worth to a' the earth,
An honour to his nation.
Like mortals a', he's gane awa,
Frae earthly wile and worry ;
Yet here we meet to praise and greet
The glimmer o' his glory,
This famous night.



THE LASSIE I MET WI' YESTREEN.

AFTER Nature gave woman her figure and grace,
She pray'd for a charm to beguile,
So, when giving the finishing touch to her face,
She tapered it off with a smile.
A smile has been known to make continents quake,
As it wreathed round a beautiful eye ;
And a man, who as a coward, would tremble and shake,
For a smile has had courage to die.

So give me the lass that is hearty and free,
Whose smile is a joy to be seen ;
Here's to the lass wi' the rollicking e'e—
The lassie I met wi' yestreen.

Miss Quakeress thinks it is wicked to smile,
And that innocent mirth is a sin ;
Her face doesn't brighten, not once in a while,
For she smothers the laughter within.
Our life wasn't meant for a funeral show—
There's a season for all sorts of things ;
And sadness will come without wishing, you know,
So we needn't provide it with wings.

So give me, &c.

There's infection in mirth when it once get a start,
If it's stamped with the genuine brand ;
The brighter the smile is, the lighter the heart,
And the nearer to Nature we stand.
And mankind will ever subservient be
At morn, at mid-day, or at e'en ;
As long's there's a lass wi' a rollicking e'e,
Like the lassie I met wi' yestreen.

So give me, &c.



THE BELL O' THE PORT.

AULD leather-faced Jock, the Laird o' the Loan,
Was a kind an' a canty chiel ;
Wi' his whisky mill and his wee hauf-gill
He had lined his pooches weel.

There was nae "ashfelt" in the drink he sell't,
But through Campbeltown worms it cam',
An' the folk o' the Port respeckit him for't,
As they aye could be sure o' their dram

Noo the auld kirk bell had lang rung yell
Of a sonorous Sunday soun'—
What could ye expect frae siccan a wreck?
It was crackit frae lip tae croon.

The Laird lay doon on the braid o' his back,
An' reasoned the point wi' himsel';
Then says he: "Guidwife, since o' siller I'm rife,
I'll gi'e the guid folk a bell!"

So he invited the Provost to come to his hoose,
He sent for the Bailies three,
An' then he began, as a modest man,
On the gift that he fain wad gi'e.

The gift gaed doon, an' the gill gaed roun',
As they clinkit their glasses there—
They drank lang life tae the Laird an' his wife,
An' they aye had a gill the mair.

The bell was cast afore Martimas pass'd,
It was tongued an' sent alang,
An' was taken in haun' by the auldest man
On the Bench, ca'd Bailie Whang.

"Faith, I will see it richt geared," quo' he,
"An' slung in its proper place—
The folk o' the Port will credit me for't,
An' the Lord will gi'e me grace."

Noo, Bailie Whang nicht paper hang
Frae a window to a door—
Being painter bred—but it maun be said
He ne'er hung a bell before.

So when it cam' doon, he examin'd it roun,
An' said to his foreman, Bob :
"Ye had better, yersel', tak' an' paint that bell,
For it looks like a gey rough job.

His word was law 'mang the big and sma',
Wherever he gaed about ;
So they smeared it clean in the rawest green
Wi' three coats in and oot.

Without a hitch in the belfry niche
They bushed and balanced it true ;
Then when a' was in shape, they rove the rape
For the minister's man to pu'.

Auld Whang was gay next Sabbath day,
For the Provost an' Bailies were there ;
While the folk o' the Port o' every sort
Were gathered in street and square.

An' leather-faced Jock was amang the folk,
A prood, prood man was he—
Being brawly kent, he was weel content
To be glow'ed at by every e'e.

The rape was pu'd and the bell was slew'd—
In fac' it turned hauf-way roun'—
Then owre cam' the tongue as it backwards swung,
But the deevil the ghost o' a soun'.

Wi' nervous han' the minister's man
Dragged a' his nicht an' main ;
He rax'd an' rugg'd, an' tore an' tugg'd,
Till he threw his shouther bane :

But never a clang frae that belfry rang ;
An' the folk set up a yell
As the word passed on that the Laird o' the Loan
Had gi'en them a wooden bell.

Tae the donor's hoose the Bailies douce,
Wi' the Provost, slipp'd alang,
To jink the crood an' fin' oot, if they could,
Whatever had gane wrang.

Says Whang : " I'll sweer, as sure's I'm here,
The bell's baith trig and clean ;
For I mysel' ha'e gi'en that bell
Three coats o' gabbart green."

Wi' that the Provost drapped his jaw,
An' he swore like a dragoon—
" Nae wunner," quo' he, " the bell's agee,
Nae wunner it wadna soun'."

Baith loud an' lang they blackguarded Whang,
Wha had them thus beguiled—
For the upshot meant that, to lift the paint,
It would ha'e to be scraped an' boiled.

It was boiled in a Greenock sugar pan,
An' scraped wi' a cooper's hoop,
While the folk gaed mad owre the fun they had,
As they yell'd an' roar'd " Bell Soup."

It's a lang, lang while since that scrape and boil—
Far longer than tongue can tell—
But the name o' the Port is still famous for't,
As the borough that boiled the bell !

THE CROOKED PIN.

THE furnaces had long been tapped,
The ore ran red and slow,
And the stars shone thro' a moonless zone
Like pin-points all aglow.

Twas pay night, and each moulder held
His wages in his fob,
And waited but to see the last
Of a successful job.

A lanky man, with visage wan—
No Gifford lecturer he,
Nor Palmer-grey on shrine bound way,
Nor Dervish devotee—

Stood gazing by the furnace fence ;
And as that melted ore
Came welling out the nether spout,
He ever laughed the more.

"Why laugh ye?" cried the moulder men,
Who quickly gathered round ;
"As you can see, the draws are free,
And well troughed lies the ground."

"Men," cried the lanky one at length,
"Strange tho' it may appear,
I laughed because I knew I was
More learned than any here.

"Ye think those furnaces are great,
Perhaps you think them grand ;
And, goodness knows, you may suppose
This is a mighty land—

"A mighty planet, if you like—
This one you're labouring in ;
And yet you'll find, if you've a mind,
I'll hide a mightier sphere behind
The brass head of a pin.

"A sphere, perchance, where millions toil
From morn till dewy eve ;
Where men in arms, midst wars' alarms,
Make countless thousands grieve :

"Where oceans roll, volcanoes burst,
And wild tornadoes roar ;
Where furnaces as large as yours
May smelt a kindred ore ;

"Where temples guard some sacred trust,
But not to ours akin ;
Remember, men, I've said I bind
Myself to hide the lot behind
The brass head of a pin."

"He's mad," the ironworkers cried,
"As mad as he can be ;
'Tis plain that learning's turned his head,
And made him as we see."

The lanky being felt aggrieved,
And bade his hearers stay,
Then pointed upwards with his hand
Towards the milky way.

A tiny point of light was there
Observed by all the band ;
'Twas nothing much, a thousand such
They marked on every hand.

"There," said he, "is the world I wot,
That tiny point of light ;
You may accredit me or not,
But mark you, I am right."

This new Gallileo, there and then,
Looked solemnly around,
And fumbling pressed his tattered vest
Until a pin he found.

"Naught but a pin, my friends," said he,
"And partly crooked, too,
Yet, holden by the point, its head
Will hide yon star from view."

Each moulder in his turn now came
To test the simple fact,
And surety got that there was not
Some hocus in the act.

At last they all were satisfied
And thanked that thoughtful wight ;
He stuck the pin his vest within,
And wished them all good-night.

A moment more and he was gone
For ever from their gaze,
They pondering o'er his learned lore
And scientific ways.

Then home each went in deep content,
And did their wives regale,
Concerning him, the star-struck gent,
Likewise his wond'rous tale.

"Where be your wages?" cried the wives :
They felt their fobs in vain,
But ne'er a penny piece had they—
The lanky one was far away
With all their weekly gain.



PERHAPS.

THE king had heir'd his father's crown—
A youthful potentate.
In thoughtful mood, he vow'd he would
Be wise as well as great.

The gold of Ophir filled his vaults,
His argosies unfurled
Wings o'er the foam to bear him home
The commerce of the world.

His soldiers on the tented plains
Were countless as the sands,
And bore his name with conquering fame
Through far and distant lands.

Thus all that pomp and power could give
He held by right of birth,
Yet, grievous thrall, he craved for all
The wisdom of the earth.

His "vizier," who controlled the realm,
Knelt to the royal one—
"What would'st thou, Sire, from me require?
Command, and it is done."

"Search," cried he, "midst the learned men,
On whom my favours fall,
On things occult I would consult
The wisest of them all."

Soon Hamid stands before the King,
And bows his ancient head,
His lore well known, far, far outshone
The living or the dead.

"Born to a throne," the King began,
"I long for something more ;
And it is this—I would possess
All wisdom's mighty store.

"And to this end I bid thee bring
For this my enterprise,
Such books to read as I should need,
'The volumes of the wise.'"

Commissioned thus, good Hamid chose
The writings of the great
In ages gone—and those full-grown
In knowledge up to date.

Bewildered stood the youthful King,
And view'd the vast array
Of tomes that held the wealth of eld
In wisdom's sacred way.

“Read these, oh ! King, in them, behold !
All knowledge is defined ;
That labour past, lo ! Sire, thou hast
The wisdom of mankind.”

The Monarch shuddered at the thought ;
“Life is too short,” said he ;
“And yet I yearn, for I would learn
All that may in them be.”

“So choose for me a score of books,
The rarest and the best,
From this array, whose wisdom may
Embody all the rest.”

Well did the sage his part perform,
And brought the chosen score ;
“Those, Sire,” he said, “when thou hast read,
Embrace all earthly lore.”

Askance the King upon them gazed,
And thus he made reply,
“It were a bore to read a score,
I will not even try.”

"Yet search, good Hamid, once again,
And bring me one that shall,
Amongst the twenty that I see,
Contain the pith of all."

'Twas done, and, lo ! the old man stood,
According to command,
In reverent guise, with wearied eyes,
One volume in his hand.

"Oh, Sire, I have fulfilled my task,
And made my further quest ;
Read this with gain, it doth contain
The wisdom of the rest."

"'Tis good," again the King replied,
"And yet I do not care
That I should look throughout this book
To glean great knowledge there."

Thus said he, and a final thought
Unto his mind occurred,
"Find me the wisdom of the world
Concentred in a word."

For the last time old Hamid came,
That word was in his mind ;
A pen he took, in open book
The word he underlined.

"Sire," said he, "I've found that at which
Man's vanities collapse ;
All earthly knowledge exercised
And mortal wisdom are comprised
Within the word, 'Perhaps!'"

CLAVERHOOSE AND THE DEIL.

THE LEGEND OF THE HOOF-MARK ON ARDROSSAN CASTLE.

[*Note.*—On the northern side of the ruined castle at Ardrossan is to be seen to this day the mark of a horse-shoe indented on one of the stones forming the base of the building. Folk-lore has it that this was the impression left by Claverhouse's horse when he was pursued by the Deil, and who, to elude his Satanic Majesty, leapt over the castle-head. Claverhouse and his dragoons were located in Irvine at one time, so it is to be supposed the deil-hunt took place then. Presumably the imprint was made when the horse alighted, as it is on the opposite side from the ancient gateway.]

A TIME there was when Irvine folk
Were filled with deep dismay,
Thro' bearded loons, the King's dragoons,
In Claverhooose's day.

Resting awhile from red turmoil,
'Midst riot and 'midst rant,
That slaughtering brood forgot their feud
Wi' League an' Covenant.

Wild was the night ; wi' lightnings bright
The welkin seemed aglow,
As Lucky Kirsty closed her door,
An' trimmed her cruisy, something more
Than ten score years ago.

A spae-wife she of dark degree,
Her son a towsy chiel,
An' tinker bred, while rumour said
They baith worked for the deil.

Tho' bald an' auld in heid an' hide,
An' dried like harvest stook,
She threw her spinning wheel aside,
An' ope'd her magic book.

Why busk ye in your black attire,
An' like a howlet cry?
Why burn a button i' the fire,
Oh, Lucky Kirsty, why?

She's sprinkled sea-saut ower the hearth,
She's thrawn a levret's throat,
An' wi' her shears she's slit its ears,
An' tied them in a knot.

Some eerie rite they're at this night,
Unknown to honest folk;
She's working weel to raise the deil,
An' malison evoke.

An' yet it often happens that,
To those of wicked years,
Wha hardest work to raise the deil,
Waur than the deil appears.

Ere she had cast the gruesome spell,
Her door's flung open wide,
Drenched to the skin there marches in
A man wi' haughty stride.

He shakes his plume across the room,
He shakes his martial cloak,
He marks the man, an' speech began—
'Twas Claverhooze that spoke.

“Curst be your weather o’ the west,”
Cried he, an’ fiercely frowned ;
“Curst be your weather o’ the west—
I’ll ne’er be nearer drowned.”

“Hie to the door, ye lumbering lout,
And hold my charger well.”
But Bauldy leer’d, an snarling sneer’d—
“Gae haud the horse yoursel’.”

The man that ruled a thousand horse
By Royal King’s command
Could little brook vile speech or look
From any in the land.

His blade he drew that often slew
The worthy men o’ grace ;
An’ wi’ a frown struck Bauldy down
Before his mother’s face.

Wi’ dying yell the victim fell
Upon the floor, and e’er
Up ingle vent the echo spent
The muckle deil stood there.

No wonder Claverhooze drew back—
His blade dropped on the floor—
For little grace the fiend’s dark face
Upon that instant bore.

His heid was horned, and weel-adorned
Wi’ lugs on either side,
While grizzly hair grew everywhere
Upon his blastit hide.

His arms were long, his talons strong,
His e'en threw aff a heat ;
His tail was pointed like a dirk,
In lower limbs he looked a stirk,
Even to his cloven feet.

At length he spoke, 'mid brimstone-smoke
An' " Bull of Bashan " roar—
" Your mine in body and in soul
For now and evermore.

" I bound you by a nameless oath
That iron, steel, or lead,
In bloody fight, by day or night,
Would never strike thee dead,

" While preaching Pedens were your prey,
Or ranting Whigs your line ;
But, mark me, ye were not as much
As ever to attempt to touch
A follower o' mine.

" Here Lucky Kirsty's son you've slain,
Against my stern decree ;
Wi' broken vow I'll nail thee now,
An' bear ye hence wi' me."

Now, Claverhoose's heart was brave,
A heart that danger scorns ;
Yet did he shake and quake wi' fear,
As Cloutie called his minions near
By whustling thro' his horns.

He heard the burr of leather wings
Abune the outer blast ;
But fearless Graham was ever game,
And dangerous to the last.

A table stood between the pair,
An' so, for woe or weal,
He caught it up wi' frenzied grup
And hurled it at the deil.

Its legs got jammed amang his horns,
It felled him to the floor,
An' ere he drew his breath anew,
Graham was ayont the door.

He threw his legs across his horse,
He sank the rowels deep,
Firmly inclined within his mind
The *Saightown road to keep.

'Tis hard for human mind to think
How a poor mortal feels,
Who knows that imps as black as coal,
To gain possession of his soul,
Are hurrying at his heels.

Speed on, speed on, bold Claverhooze,
He only wins who strives ;
An' man or horse maun clink the course
Wi' spunk when Cloutie drives.

* Or Saints-town, an old name for Kilwinning.

Now Saigtown road by night is dark,
An' Saigtown road is drear ;
Yet must he ride, nor turn aside,
Wi' demons in his rear.

Between the trees, betimes he sees
A distant gleam of light ;
For Winton's lord and ladies gay
Are holding highest revelry
At Eglintoune that night.

What cares he for their revelry,
As turning in his seat
He sees behind a devil's flood
Pursuing, and he hears the thud
Of Satan's cloven feet.

His coal-black steed is white wi' foam
From nostrils to the rump,
Belike bewitched, it gallops good,
An' clearing nearly half a rood
At every single jump.

The Saigtown folk, at eerie hour,
That night a-bed did hear
The clattering hoofs upon the street,
The dreadful tramp of cloven feet,
An' knew the deil was near.

No refuge there for Claverhooze,
He needs must northwards turn ;
Wi' anxious haste he rattles o'er
The road that leads him near the shore
Where Saltcoats pan-fires burn.

The pan-men saw th' unholy pack
Far in the distant mirk ;
Unskimmed they left their brine to seethe,
An' ran for saintly refuge 'neath
The guid auld parish kirk.

Graham onwards hied until he spied,
Amid the lightning's glare,
A castle-keep on wooded steep,
And hoped for safety there.

Thro' Saltcoats town the maddened steed
Wi' mighty gallop ran ;
Behind, Auld Cloutie yell'd an' screeched,
As Claverhooose uphill-ward reached
The castle barbican.

But imps are handier than the deil,
So at his warning roar
They nimbler sped, an' shot ahead
To block the castle door.

An' ere bold Graham the courtyard gained,
He saw to his chagrin
That imps in thousands barr'd his way—
On every side in droves they lay—
He never could get in.

Nor could he turn his horse's tail,
And syne retrace his track—
Auld Nick was grunting up the brae,
An' almost at his back.

He saw the trap, an' onwards spurr'd
His horse, wi' vengeance now ;
She took the leap thus urged to try,
Shot like a catapult on high,
An' cleared the castle brow.

Alighting on the further side,
Wi' hindmost hoof she hit
The castle wa' a thundering blow,
An' left a mark on it.

Near by a parish kirk then stood,
Towards it he held his mare—
'Twas his last chance—he must advance—
Deils daurna enter there.

An' just as roun' the castle en'
Auld Nickie Ben pursues,
Graham leapt the humble kirkyard wa'
Dashed thro' a window, horse an' a',
An' dropp'd amang the pews.

There's three things witches, deils, and imps
Can never cross, they say—
That's running water, a kirk door,
And the honest light o' day.

Safe 'neath that Presbyterian roof
He stood till daylight's glow,
When deil-conducted gangs maun quit
The gravest job they're at, and flit
To hotter climes below.

Full many a weary year has passed
Since that eventful night ;
The kirk is levelled to the ground,
Marked only by a grass-grown mound
That shows its ancient site.

The castle is a ruin now,
But to this very day,
There we behold the hoof-mark deep
That tells of Claverhooze's leap
When Cloutie barr'd his way.



*MISTER BROWN; OR, THE MERMAID'S
FUNERAL.*

'TWAS all on the blue West Indian sea,
The good ship sailed along,
Her starboard tacks were well on board,
And the North-east trades were strong.

Far off 'neath the palpitating gleam
Of the burnished light of day,
And dipping on her weather beam,
The coast of Cuba lay.

Now, Mister Brown on board that craft
Was cook and steward too,
And much detested fore and aft
By all that good ship's crew.

A trick at the wheel he couldn't take ;
But when store time would come,
He knew a certain trick to make
The scales obey his thumb.

Thus, as he measured pound and pint,
He weighed them rather low ;
Jack growled, but took his all the same ;
And this is why the steward came
To be detested so.

In what he stole from stores each day,
His interest meant gold ;
And so, what Mister Brown did say,
The captain did uphold.

Now, Mister Brown that morn had done,
Of work, a fair good stroke,
And so, unto himself, he said
He would go forward to "the head"
And have a pleasant smoke.

"The head" is just the sort of place
Where loafing oft is done—
To lie behind the name-board rail,
And see the dripping martingale
Spread dog-beams in the sun.

There, Mister Brown his body flung,
Spread-eagle-wise, once more ;
For, be it known, he oft had "slung"
The hatchet "there afore.

* Nautical term for loafing.

He looked into the watery depths—
He watched the waves as they
Curved up and dashed against the bow
In devious manner—anyhow—
Then shivered into spray.

“Oh ! this is grand,” thought Mister Brown,
“’Tis glorious thus to be ;”
He shut his eyes, rolled o’er, and—well
He absolutely felt he fell
Into the under-sea.

Down, down he sank like deep-sea lead,
Down through the water clear,
And saw in shadow overhead
The good ship disappear.

“I feel I’m drowned,” cried Mister Brown,
“The ship hath onward sped ;
I feel that I am drowned, and yet
I feel I am not dead.”

The water filled his ears and nose,
And pressed against his eyes ;
He wildly threw his arms about,
And vainly strove to rise.

Some influence held him in command,
And downwards drawn was he,
Until he stood upon the sand-
Ribbed bottom of that sea.

He cast his wandering eyes around,
Astonished and amazed,
On shell-clad capitals and plinths
That faced the entrance to labyrinths,
Where coral splendour blazed.

Strange fish with pectorals branching wide
Swam listless everywhere,
Quite conscious in that nether tide
That Mister Brown was there.

Vile crabs of a gigantic size
Crawled broadside on their way,
And glared at him with murd'rous eyes
That marked him for their prey.

He tried to shout courageously,
He tried in vain to weep ;
He tried, but found he couldn't pray,
Full forty fathom deep.

And as he stood in dire suspense,
Not knowing what to think,
A Mermaid burst upon his view—
A lovely Mermaid was she too—
With tail as black as ink.

She looked into his startled face,
She smiled with coyish glee ;
Her hair was yellow, and her bust,
Devoid of covering, was just
The bust he liked to see.

She fondled him like turtle-dove,
And Mister Brown looked glum ;
She whispered, " You must wait, my love,
Until the mermaids come.

" Ullila was our Ocean Queen,
Who over us held sway ;
She died last night, and now we mean
To bury her to-day.

" We're all in mourning half-way down,
A month this must prevail ;
We're all in mourning Mister Brown,
Pray, look ye at my tail."

An eerie feeling o'er him crept,
He trembled to his toes,
The while the mermaid talked, and kept
Gyrating round him as she swept
Her tail beneath his nose.

" Fair Mermaid," spluttered Mister Brown,
" Deep sorrow must be thine,
Ullila's dead, and so you grieve ;
But really, with your kindest leave,
'Tis no affair of mine."

" It is, at such a time," she said,
" Our laws doth so contrive,
Should stranger's presence intervene,
We do him honour with our Queen,
By burying him alive."

Poor Mister Brown this misery faced,
With terror in his eye ;
Such great distinction was misplaced,
He didn't want to die.

"What, ho !" she cried, "the funeral comes,"
And thro' the deep abyss
He heard a mournful dirge intoned,
And from his heart of hearts he groaned,
"What killing honour's this?"

A thousand mermaids now approached,
In mourning half-way down ;
Their yellow locks around them flowed ;
With tangle-rope they slowly towed
Their Queen towards Mister Brown.

"Cut off his limbs," each Mermaid cries,
"Formalities we'll wave ;
We've lots of tails of every size
Within the coral cave."

"Spare me," he prayed, in piteous tones,
As meek as any lamb ;
"If die I must, I hope and trust
You'll kill me as I am."

"'Twere an insult unto our Queen,"
They answered with a wail ;
"'Twere sacrilege we dared not face,
To bury you in such a place,
Unless you have a tail."

Into the green labyrinth they made
Their way with Mister Brown,
And on a coral slab they laid
His body gently down.

An "old one" now with knife approached,
To where the victim lay ;
Poor Mister Brown, despairing, shut
His eyes while this same "old one" cut
His lower limbs away.

A handsome tail, as black as coal,
Against his trunk was prest ;
And the next instant, strange to tell,
He felt that he could swim as well
As any of the rest.

On, now the funeral cortege bore,
And swam with solemn stroke ;
The corpse bobb'd up, the corpse bobb'd down ;
"Oh ! woe is me," cried Mister Brown ;
But never a word they spoke.

"I am too humble born for you
To bury me down below ;
If this distinction bears such grace,
Let some kind Mermaid take my place,
And let your servant go."

"'Tis vain," they cried, "the rule unto
Thee only doth apply,
We gladly each would share this fame,
But dare not ; for our laws proclaim
The stranger met must die."

He groaned in spirit as he swam,
A sacrifice to be ;
And thought upon his good ship, gone
With flowing canvas, sailing on
The blue West Indian sea.

At length they halted near a wall
Of coral, rising high ;
While at its root, a two-foot hole
Yawned for his body, tail, and soul ;
While terror glazed his eye.

Thro' it the water gurgling rushed,
The Lord knows only where ;
He shuddered as they took their Queen
And reverently shoved her in
That hole, headforemost there.

His turn now came, they caught his arms,
And gently drew him down
Towards the hole ; while, grieved and sad,
Each individual Mermaid bade
Farewell to Mister Brown.

They pushed his head and shoulders through
That opening in the rock ;
He felt the water rushing past
His spinal column : and at last
Poor Mister Brown awoke.

Near the knight-heads, above him, grinned
Each able-bodied Jack ;
Some wag had caught him at his doze,
And for a lark had played the hose
Full-tilt upon his back.

He rubbed his eyes, 'twas all a dream,
His clothes were soaked and soiled ;
So rushing thro', amongst that crew,
He reached the "galley," and he knew
The grub had all been spoiled.

The soup was singed, the beef was black,
The plum-duff boiled to pap ;
The lime-juice sauce had changed to gall,
All through that mermaid's funeral,
In his unlucky nap.

He ne'er forgave the prank they played,
And took revenge therefor,
With pound and pint ; for that same crew
From then had great occasion to
Detest him all the more.



THE ARCHIPELAGO.

For a week on end, to a very day,
Our good corvette had lain,
With her canvas battering away
In a "Paddy's hurricane."
While all around peeped the Grecian Isles,
Some mountain crowned, some low,
And the calm was deep, for the sea was asleep,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

Like a red hot cannon-ball, the sun
Spun round, with its blistering heat,
And the pitch from the seams ran o'er in streams,
And stuck to the sailors' feet.
An "articled" oath the captain swore,
"According to Hoyle," you know,
For he never had seen such a calm before
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

We had fired with our big guns fore and aft,
Till the air with smoke was blue,
As at stated times each naval craft
Is in duty bound to do.
And we all were as black as the devil's top boots,
So they piped all hands below,
When a strange affair came to pass right there,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

Just then a sailor at work aloft
Let a yell would have sprung the dead,
And he gave us to know, on the deck below,
That a rock lay right ahead.
We all made a run for the fo'castle rail,
And half a mile off, or so,
We saw, not a rock, but a mighty whale,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

"Hard a-port, hard a-port," our captain cried,
But our craft not a move would make,

While on came the whale a-lashing its tail,
And churning the sea in its wake.
In a brace of shakes the monster struck
Our stem with a thundering blow,
Then with cloven head it rolled over dead
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

As it floated past our good ship's side,
A score of ropes we threw,
And it caught in each bight, so we bound it tight,
And thrapped the lashings too.
Now the captain had been a-whaling once,
And says he, with his eyes aglow,
"We'd be fools, I think, if we let it sink
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

"Here's a goodly spoil of whalebone and oil,
And we'll share alike, because
You can take the blubber that's on its back,
And I shall take its jaws."
So we worked with a will, and stripped it, until
Its ribs lay bare in a row,
Then with axes and saws we severed its jaws
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

When the job was done, a son of a gun
Shouted out "Shipmates, look here,
I'm darned if I ain't heard a bell ring faint
In the monster's starboard ear."

We stared at the bloke, and thought it a joke,
But his words came solemn and slow,
"If you find I have lied, chuck me over the side,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago."

So we bent close down, with our ears to its ribs,
A-listening, and strange to tell,
We found that the youth had but spoken the truth,
For we all heard the sound of a bell.
The bo'sun stood up, and he scratched his head,
And say's he, "Mates the devil's below,
Or a bell's somehow shipp'd in this whale that we stripp'd,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago."

"Cut into his stomach," the captain cried,
And we did as we were told,
For we thought that a bell from a whale's inside
Should be worth its weight in gold.
So we quickly "dug" out a man-hole door
Where we thought that the stomach would show,
When a head popped out of that whale with a shout,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

"Help me out," cried the voice, "for the love of life,
Help me out, or I'll die as I stand,"
So we pulled out a man, spotted black and tan,
With a bell firmly grasped in his hand.
"Who are you?" we cried, and he hoarsely replied,
"My name was once Jonah, I know,

'That's before that I fell overboard with this bell
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.'

And the yarn that he spun was a curious one :
He had slipped overboard, that was all,
Through a nasty ground swell, as he rang the tea-bell,
And none on his ship saw him fall.
He had given up hope, as the vessel sped on,
And he felt he was drowning—when lo !
A whale, as he thought, sucked him down thro' its throat
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

He survived in a way, for two nights and a day,
Decomposing in gastric juice ;
He had crawled all about, trying hard to get out,
But it wasn't a bit of use.
At length when he heard our big guns overhead,
A hope in his heart seemed to grow,
And he rang like a fiend till the big fish careened
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

For he felt the full shock as it suddenly broke
And splintered its forehead in two,
And when we had caught it, he said that he thought,
He could tell what we purposed to do.
His hope was his bell, so he rang it right well,
At least Jonah Jones told us so ;
And the bell and the knife saved that poor fellow's life,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.

Now it's quite true enough, the yarn seems tough,
But you needn't discredit it, when
You are solemnly told what a fish did of old—
Why can't a fish do it again?
So believing the tale of that earlier whale,
And a similar globe-trotting Jo,
The best you can do is to swallow this too,
In the Archipelago, my boys,
In the Archipelago.



ON THE LOSS OF H.M.S. "VICTORIA."

MOURN, ye mothers of Old England,
For the many filled with woe,
And with grief in spirit mingling
Let your tide of pity flow
For the brave four hundred sailors,
Now at rest beneath the brine,
Who at drill and duty's station
Sank on sudden dire occasion,
With the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.
Weep, ye mothers, wives, and daughters,
For the hearts beneath the brine,
'Neath the blue Levantine waters,
In the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.

There was never sound of battle
Bursting thro' the startled air,

Nor a cyclone's rush and rattle
Spreading devastation there.
It was near the coast of Syria,
And the afternoon was fine,
When, by dire misfortune guided,
The "Camperdown" collided
With the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.
Weep, ye mothers, wives, and daughters,
For the hearts beneath the brine,
'Neath the blue Levantine waters
In the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.

Like steed at wild bull-baiting,
Ripped by Andalusian steer,
Was the good ship's armour plating
Rent from keelson strake to sheer ;
For she listed, filled, and foundered,
And the summer's sun did shine,
As with the squadron's eye on
They sank with gallant Tryon
On the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.
Weep, ye mothers, wives, and daughters,
For the hearts beneath the brine,
'Neath the blue Levantine waters
In the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.

No more her cannon's thunder
Across the waves shall sweep,
She's moored for ever under
The bosom of the deep ;

Where coral kissed her bulwarks
The tangles intertwine,
While the sorrow of a nation
Joins with those in tribulation
For the battle-ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.
Weep, ye mothers, wives, and daughters
For the hearts beneath the brine,
'Neath the blue Levantine waters
In the battle ship "Victoria"
Of the Royal British Line.



A SOUL'S FAREWELL TO THE BODY

I saw a spirit from the flesh unwed,
Emancipated from its corse of clay ;
It lingered for a moment ere it sped
For ever on its new immortal way.

Nearing that silent self, now stiff and stark,
It gazed with pity on its shadowy face,
Knowing too well the grave, so cold and dark,
Yawned for this remnant of its dual race.

Thus stood the purer essence desolate,
While o'er that form its touchless fingers ran,
Where both commingling had, in one estate,
Fulfilled the fitful destiny of man.

Oh ! fateful severance ; now the mortal part
Lay all unconscious, free from every pang ;
And as I gazed in wonder, through my heart
The lamentation of that spirit rang.

“Farewell,” it cried ; “my earthly part, farewell,
I go a new existence to assume ;
Throughout the arch-eternity to dwell,
And leave thee to thy disintegrate doom.

“Oft hath that bosom throbbed in eager hour
Filled with my spirit-energy within ;
Where'er my purpose bent its pliant power,
In paths of rectitude or paths of sin.

“In dissolution's pale, I love thee still—
Thou wert the tabernacle of my day ;
Through our companionship mine was the will,
Thine but the function only to obey.

“Thou wert the harbour of my mortal term,
I gleaned earth's pleasures thro' thy robust breath ;
I grew within thee from thy earliest germ,
Coincident in birth, but not in death.

“Throughout the cycles I must live, whilst thou,
My other part, have reached thy great Amen ;
And with the dew of death upon thy brow,
Must wither into nothingness again.

“Those thou endeared unto thyself thro' me
Weep for that mortal part they only knew ;
Now thy eternal self doth weep for thee,
And sorrowfully bids a last adieu.

“No more in wedded image shall we tell
Our mutual numbers, as in days of yore ;
I journey hence for ever ; fare thee well !
A long and last farewell for evermore.”

CATHKIN BRAES.

(Music by Mr. JAMES BOYD.)

SWEET fa's the gloamin' ower Cathkin Braes,
Oh ! for the love that I dinna hae ;
Ower the wild broom an' the white hawthorn bloom,
Oh ! for the love-lorn days.
Memories will live though the days roll by—
Days when my own true love and I
Wandered about, 'neath the summer sky,
Over the Cathkin braes.

Chorus.

Cathkin Braes, dear Cathkin Braes,
Dame Nature's wildest shrine ;
Love-lorn days, sweet love-lorn days,
Oh ! for that love o' mine.

Love was our lode-star ower Cathkin Braes,
Oh ! for the love that I dinna hae ;
Noble in mind, he was honest and kind,
Oh ! for the love-lorn days.
Writ on my bosom his image appears,
Writ on my bosom in sorrow and tears ;
A' the sweet hours in the far awa years,
Over the Cathkin Braes.

A spirit voice whispers ower Cathkin Braes,
Oh ! for the love that I dinna hae—
Whispers an' sighs as the gloaming dies,
Oh ! for the love-lorn days.
Hearts will sorrow and bosoms burn,
All for the love that will ne'er return ;
Weary I wander and weary I mourn,
Over the Cathkin Braes.

**SWEETHEARTS WILL COME
BY AND BY.**

(Music by the Author.)

Down where the ocean-borne waters
Sweep past Innellan's green shore,
Lives one of Nature's own daughters,
Blythe as a fairy of yore ;
Love in her bosom lies sleeping,
Guarded by angels on high,
Safely assured in their keeping,
Sweethearts will come by and by.

Lips never fashioned for scorning,
Eyes that will melt in love's noon,
Bright as the blush of the morning,
Sweet as the blossom in June.
Maidenly grace is a glory
Mankind can never deny ;
Promising still the old story,
Sweethearts will come by and by.

Poetry arches her eyebrows,
Merriment beams thro' her smile,
Thrilling the soul-sensing fibres,
Witching with innocent wile.
Jewels soon meet with an owner,
Never a maiden need sigh ;
Fortune and fate wait upon her,
Sweethearts will come by and by.

LOVE DAYS.

THINK of the past when the grey years are falling,
Heavy and white like the snow on the hill ;
Think of the past, all its pleasures recalling,
Memories, fond memories, a-lingering still.
Happy those love-days, so glad some and bright,
When our affections were crowned with delight ;
Yes, yes, we see them, afar off we see them,
Love's distant beacons like stars thro' the night.

Chorus.

Love days, when olden,
Seem glorious and golden,
Filled with remembrance of joys we once knew ;
Living, still giving,
Their foretaste of heaven,
Love days were golden for I and for you.

Brimful of fervour, the dim future scorning,
Building our castles of bliss in the air ;
High rose our hearts on the wings of the morning,
Bold beat our bosoms, defying dull care.
Deep in life's shadow each memory appears
Of faces and forms that the distance endears ;
Yes, yes, we see them, afar off we see them,
Landmarks of love thro' the vista of years.

Soon shall we leave like the loved ones before us,
Soon shall we slumber within the dark vale ;
Yet though the shroud of oblivion falls o'er us,
Love shall continue its marvellous tale.

Dear are those joys of the long, long ago,
Hallowing mortals the older they grow ;
Yes, yes, we see them, afar off we see them,
On the altar of love with its lights burning low.



IN THE GLOAMING OF THE YEAR.

WHEN above the ingle-bar
Streams the Yule-log's ruddy rays,
And the friends from far and near
Gather round the cheerful blaze,
To share a Christmas greeting
With the hearts they hold most dear ;
What a happy, happy meeting
In the gloaming of the year.

Chorus.

Welcome Christmas, merry Christmas,
With its tidings of good cheer ;
Welcome Christmas, merry Christmas,
In the gloaming of the year.

Then the ice seals up the brook,
Then the snow wreathes Nature o'er,
And the robin red-breasts look
For the crumbs without the door ;

While within the mirthful measure
Tells the tale to listening ear ;

Bosoms brimming o'er with pleasure,
In the gloaming of the year.

Still, the absent ones may be
Distant far, on devious ways,
Whom a parent's eye can see
In the light of other days.
With the heartfelt wish expressing,
That some morn they may appear,
To receive a Christmas blessing,
In the gloaming of the year.



A STROPHIC ANAGLYPH.

THE throbbing millions that have faced this sphere
In ages past, outwith our mortal ken,
Now throb no more, forgotten sons of men ;
Their longing lives have passed, their dust lies here,
Wrapt in the shadow of oblivion drear.

Earth to the earth, dust to the gathering dust,
Used up material, void of grit or grace ;
The wild winds moan a requiem o'er the race
Now powdered over Nature's upper crust—
A grand amalgam, requisite and just.

The proud, the weak, the strong, the "unco guid,"
Succumbed, no matter what their vaunted skill,
Their grip of genius or their iron will—

Turned up their toes, and disintegrated
Their measure weighed, their light for ever hid.

Yet, leaving legacies of learned lore,
And progress for succeeding mankind's good ;
While o'er this living-dying mortal brood
The mountain tops look down for evermore,
The same old peaks as in the years of yore.

The cynic but beholds this restless raid,
This mixed humanity of borrowed breath,
Surging the narrow pass 'twixt life and death,
In wanton struggle, 'neath a death-doomed shade,
And learns the hard philosophy portrayed.

As many fall and drop into the dark,
At wearied, worried Nature's certain call,
Tired in her secret time of one and all,
She clears the scene for those of younger mark,
Who on life's trip light-heartedly embark.

Keeping humanity thus up to date,
The played out, palsied order giving way
To newer tenants for the newer day ;
And so the tramp goes on with steady gait,
The wing of Providence o'ershadowing Fate.

Like the dead dust we'll blink upon the brow
Of rolling time, all for our little day,
Nor solve life's mystic puzzle more than they ;
It still remains the same old puzzle now,
The pregnant why, the wherefore, and the how.

**THE GREEN, GREEN BANKS
OF THE LEE.**

(Music by the Author.)

'Twas an evening in September,
When the glow of day was done,
I ever shall remember
The rays of that setting sun ;
They shone upon a damsel
So sweet and so fancy free—
An Irish maid, with a kirtle and a plaid,
By the green, green banks of the Lee.

Chorus.

The green, green banks, oh ! the ever-green banks,
It was there my fate met me ;
In a kirtle and a plaid, this pretty Irish maid,
By the green, green banks of the Lee.

She was a farmer's daughter,
Said she, with a smile in her eyes,
"Shure I've come for a pail of water
Just before the daylight dies."
I felt my heart pulsating,
'Twas a new-born joy to me,
This Irish maid, with a kirtle and a plaid,
By the green, green banks of the Lee.

I filled her pail with water,
And she filled my heart with love,
For I sat with that farmer's daughter
Till the stars shone out above ;

I woo'd and won my colleen,
My bride that is soon to be,
This Irish maid, with a kirtle and a plaid,
By the green, green banks of the Lee.



LOWLANDS LOW.

(Music by the Author.)

THERE'S a land in the east where the Dutchman dwells,
And he sits at his green front door ;
He smokes his pipe and he swills his swipe,
And he thinks upon the gallant days of yore.
For there once was a time when that Dutchman bold
Was a very dangerous foe,
When with little hesitation he would conquer all creation,
And take them to the Lowlands low.

Chorus.

But that's long, long ago,
Long, long ago,
To the lowlands of Holland,
To the lowlands of Holland low.

Once the great Von Tromphe with his merry men
Sailed away o'er the stormy sea,
And bade good-bye to their sweethearts so shy
On the banks of the Zuyder Zee.
By old England's shore did their broadsides roar,
While the stormy winds would blow ;
They were demons of the ocean, causing terrible commotion,
Those heroes from the Lowlands low.

With bounce and with brag they would hoist their flag,
Though the odds might be ten to one ;
Midst the battle's breath they would fight till the death
Every blessed blustering mother's son.
But as years rolled past, old Britannia at last
Learn't a wrinkle from her foe,
For, early one fine morning, she whipped with little warning
Those sailors from the Lowlands low.

Now they patch their dykes and they swill their swipes,
And smoke from noon to night ;
But never no more, as in days of yore,
Will they venture o'er the seas to fight.
Good luck to the Dutch, whom our forefathers fought
In the good old days long ago ; [story,
Tho' they lost their naval glory, they are famed in ancient
Those sailors of the Lowlands low.



DEAR AULD SCOTLAND.

(Music by the Author.)

WHEN the land we love is distant,
When our lot afar is cast,
And we muse on golden memories
Through the twilight of the past ;
A longing fills our bosom
Just to tread that soil once more,
And see the bloom and blossom
On the hedgerows as of yore.

Chorus.

Dear auld Scotland, land of heather,
O'er thy hills we love to roam,
As we did when boys together,
Dear auld Scotland, home, sweet home.

The weight of time can whiten
The locks now black as jet ;
The heart with years can blighten,
But it never can forget.
A loyal love of country
Stamps Scotia's gallant men,
And brings them to the threshold
Of their hearth and home again.

So long may Scotland flourish,
Her fame yet farther spread ;
Oft did she heroes nourish,
Who became her noble dead ;
And in the days a-coming,
If called to strike a blow,
Her sons will still defend her,
As they did in years ago.



*THE LAPSED MAHATMA;
OR, MRS. BESANT'S LOST ONE.*

A WRECK, a relic of his kind,
Strode o'er the mountains hoary,
The remnant of a master-mind,
And incarnation's glory.

His eyes held not that latent light
Where speculation's germ is ;
In fact, he was a perfect fright
Of bones and epidermis.

Upon a peak he took his seat,
And mumbled mongrel Latin,
And saw the world lie at his feet,
As once did ancient "Satan."

For ages he had marked his course
'Mid Orient's mystic portals,
Directing with his Odic force
The minds of mighty mortals.

Wafted beyond the haunts of men
When Mahomet was reigning,
He felt the cosmic quiver then,
In manner him ordaining.

Thus nurtured he his spirit's bent,
As a Mahatmic liver ;
'To be a god to mankind sent,
And guiding power for ever.

And after centuries we find
Him looking rather shoddy,
Doubtless with an almighty mind
But very little body.

Lifting his voice he shrieked aloud,
In his outlandish lingo,
And cursed the whole Mahatmic crowd
From Thibet to Domingo.

" 'Tis been a dream—*sans* bite or sup—
Like John in Isle of Patmos ;
A dream," he cried, " I'll give it up,
Mahatmas, oh ! Mahatmas.

" When Richard steered for Palestine,
A hero there to die as,
His bold resolve was only mine,
Mine his directive bias.

" When Hamlet saw his father's ghost,
Who murder intimated,
'Twas not his father's ghost he saw ;
'Twas I, through the Mahatmic law,
In spirit form translated.

" When Luther burst the Romish yoke,
And sprang the Reformation,
It was not Luther's voice that spoke ;
'Twas mine within him did invoke,
And grant the inspiration.

" Napoleon often have I tried
To curb in his ambition,
Until for Europe's good all through
I worsted him at Waterloo,
And rushed him to perdition

" I tempted Shakespeare, Walter Scott,
Macaulay, Burns, and Byron ;
Old Emperor William, old Von Moltke,
And he of blood and iron.

“With politicians of this age
My mind-force wandered daily ;
Yet, strange to say, they knew it not,
Although I’ve planned each counterplot
Of Gladstone and Disraeli.

“Self-constituted I have been
A guide to mortals human
For something like twelve hundred years,
Till now there suddenly appears
A strange Mahatmic woman.

“She’s on my trail with heart and will,
She means to go and find me,
To oust me, doubtless, from my trust ;
So, to chagrin her, I have just
Left Thibet-land behind me.

“I’m tired to death from doing good,
I’ll change my past behaviour ;
And now renounce my mystic mood,
As Theosophic saviour.

“I’m off to be a man again,
A mortal and a sinner ;
I’ll spy some cooking shop—and then
I’ll have a glorious good dinner.

“The Odic force Madame Besant
Can gather in her bustle ;
I will have none of her—not I,
She’s welcome still this cult to try,
While I work up some muscle.”

Thus spoke the lapsed Mahatma, ere
He finally was undone ;
Descending from that mountain then,
Like many other better men,
He lost himself in London.



VERSES ON GARTNAVEL ASYLUM.

WHAT a collection of suffering humanity !
Piteous examples of mental inanity,
From the first stage of incipient insanity,
Imbecile drivell, lunatic urbanity,
On to the wildest and maddest profanity !
Vanity, vanity, life is but vanity !

Miseracorde.

Reason enthroned, and dethroned, what disparity !
Here they are hid from the gaze of vulgarity,
Cared for and housed with the kindest charity,
Cheered in morbidity, nursed in hilarity !
Man's weal for man has the true solidarity
When Christian love is its noblest polarity.

Sancta Sanctissima.

Let them exist in their curtain'd not'riety,
Souls sympathetic with earnest anxiety,
Full of good hope, without fear or dubiety !
Pilot them on in the paths of propriety,
Brightening those lives with judicious variety,
Clouded with madness and bann'd from society.

Ora pro vobis.

TO DUMBARTON ROCK.

THERE you stand, a hoary sentry,
On the margin of the Clyde,
One of Nature's rocky gentry,
Riven from some mountain side ;

In an age when this good planet
By wild chaos was accurst,
When the lava red o'er-ran it,
When volcanic blisters burst.

Or, came ye from out her bosom
During some convulsive throw ?
Like a bitter pill, and gruesome,
That had disagreed below.

Or, perchance, if not the vomit
Of some subterranean gripe,
Then, perhaps, some passing comet
Shot you through its caudle pipe.

You are food for deep conjecture,
You're a text for telling lies ;
And, for antiquarian lecture,
You're a Paleozoic prize.

Whether from Hadés or Heaven
Matters not this time of day ;
When you dropped beside the Leven
Your intention was to stay.

M'GONIGAL'S VALEDICTUM*ON LEAVING FAIR DUNDEE FOR GLASGOW.*

I HA'E left fair Dundee, fu' o' honest disgust ;

May I rot, may I rust,

If I e'er again trust

The heel o' my boot on its time-honoured dust—

Like Macgregor I feel I am free.

Dundonian Bailies an' Magistrate mugs

Can hing doon their lugs, an' gang a' tae the dugs,

For they'll never get credit by me.

Whan they opened a park I was aye tae the fore,

Like the minstrels of yore,

Wi' impassioned outpour,

To immortalize a' things they did evermore—

At a funeral, a fecht, or a spree ;

But poems were lost on the ill-favoured lot,

They're owre thick in the heid, an' owre thrawn in the

So they'll never get credit by me. [throat,

So I left, an' the door o' my lodgin's I slammed,

An' my poems I crammed

In my pouches, and jammed

My hat on my heid, then I train'd an' I tram'd

Awa frae the toon o' Dundee.

It's a shame when a city stan's sae in its licht ;

In me they hae lost bard an' minstrel ootricht,

For they'll never get credit by me.

A rumour is rife that they're ettlin' tae mak'

A petition, in fac',

Tae wheedle me back ;

But I wadna return though the hale o' the pack,
 Wi' the Provost bent doon tae the knee :
 For wi' this consolation my feelings I've calmed,
 Thinks I to mysel', they can dee an' be d——d,
 For they'll never get credit by me.

Farewell to Dundee, I've come on tae the Wast,
 An' my mantle I'll cast
 Owre the present an' past
 O' St Mungo, because I'm respeckit at last
 By the people of every degree ;
 And whan I am deid in my grave, if they care
 To set up M'Gonigal's bust in the square,
 The folk of the future will hardly declare
 That they never got credit by me.



“LEUCOCYTES VERSUS BACTERIA.”

SCIENCE UP TO DATE.

I ONCE listened to the lectures of the learned Professor
 Plunck,
 And consequently got into a scientific funk,
 Because I never knew before savants had figured out
 How very much *bacteria* and *bacilli* were about.
 They have grasped the situation, and laid bare the solid
 facts,
 Of that *malignant postule*, *splenic fever*, called *anthrax* ;
 And when I thought of all the beef I'd eaten in my day,
 And all the *micro-organisms* I had stowed away,

I shuddered to my marrow bones, and almost took my bed,
Convinced beyond conviction that I ought to have been
dead.

Then the water I've been drinking has been anything but
pure,

There's *bacillus arborescence* in Loch Katrine water sure ;
And for a time I thought its *pathogenic spores* I'd got,
Developing their wavy threads somewhere within my
throat ;

And furthermore, I learnt, to my unspeakable dismay,
That *aerial microbia* was a certain truth to-day ;
Micrococci, streptococci, diplococci, and
The packeted *Sarcina* floated round on every hand ;
We breathing them through ignorance both in and out of
doors,

Our lungs and throats unwittingly macadamized by *spores*.
Oh ! what a poisoned planet this to live in night or noon ;
It made me wish I had been born in Saturn or the moon ;
My food had *micro-organisms*, that I couldn't blink,
While *mycoderma aceti* was in the beer I drink ;
Existence seemed a fraud to me, and only fit to scoff,
Had I not gleaned some confidence from Doctor Metchinkoff.
He found the wondrous *leucocytes* surmarshalled in our veins,
Awaiting the *bacterial hordes* with penalties and pains ;
In deadly strife he says they meet their dread *bacillic* foe,
To vanquish them both right and left, and eat them as they go.
Deep in my heart this knowledge made sweet hope again
begin,

And so I blessed the *leucocytes* that fight for us within.
Soon after at the shambles, in a very business way,
I was full occupied, I think, the best part of a day ;
Next morning, I felt badly, and my wife prescribed a pill,
Remarking, in an off-hand way, that I had caught a chill.

"A chill," I muttered hoarsely, "it's a something more profound ;

It's *woolsorter's disease*—in fact, it's *anthrax*, for a pound.

Some of the cows have had it," so I fancied in my heart,

And I had caught it ; then I felt the inward battle start.

I got a quart of whisky to help on the *leucocytes*,

Determined, for my own good sake, that they should have their rights ;

And then the wild *bacterial* host came rushing through my frame—

In squadrons, in battalions, and in legions, on they came.

I took a swig of whisky, and I held the bed-post firm,

And yelled out, "Good old *leucocytes*, make the *bacilli* squirm ;"

I saw my brave defenders battling through my surging veins,
And leaving millions dead upon my *intercostal* plains ;

I saw them in my mind's eye, and I cheered them being glad,

My poor wife standing by, assuming I'd gone raving mad.

"Begone," I cried, "and let me fight this inward battle out,

Else you will be a widow soon, and that without a doubt ;"

And so she left me to myself, and so I drank and cheered,

And shouted "Bravo, *leucocytes*," till victory appeared.

Then 'twas I laid me down to rest, the battle had been won,

The *micro-organisms* killed, the quart of whisky done ;

And thus I lay till morning dawned, when rising from my bed,

I felt that we had vanquished them, and then I felt my head.

The strife was o'er ; how nobly had the *leucocytes* behaved,

For, through their Spartan energy, I knew my life was saved ;

And I'm quite sure had not Plunck come a-lecturing round my way,

And Koch and Pasteur ne'er been born, I'd have been dead to-day.

UNDER AN ORANGE TREE.*(Music by the Author.)*

WHERE the Orient balm of a summer's calm
In mystic measure stole,
And the dream of day, in the twilight grey,
O'erladen the sense and soul ;
A maiden stayed, whose charms displayed
The grace that can never die,
And a cupid's dart transfixed my heart,
From the gipsy beam in her eye.

Chorus.

I met my love in an orange grove,
The star of my life is she ;
I met my love, and I told my love
Under an orange tree.

And the love that lives, and the love that gives
The true impassioned glow
Was my darling's own ; while her beauty shone
Like an angel's here below.
The sun may rise in the Southern skies,
And the starry cross gleam through ;
But they never can light up a brow so bright,
Or gladden a heart so true.

We have pledged our love, by the stars above,
We have sealed our pledge with a ring ;
And the birds combine to call her mine,
As they pipe on the buoyant wing.
May I live in her gaze thro' the happy days,
With love for my cherished theme ;
And my heart shall hold a joy untold,
And life be a golden dream.

THE GOOD OLD STORY.

ALL hail to the good old story
Of the valiant days of yore !
When the blast of martial glory
Swept on from shore to shore ;
When Wallace fought for freedom—
Auld Scotia's dauntless son ;
When Bruce the brave, with plume and glaive,
Drew sword to succour and to save,
And Bannockburn was won.

Chorus.

Sing ye the good old story,
Sing ye the old, old story,
Sing ye the famous story
Of the days of auld langsyne.

The battles of our fathers
Still echo in our ears,
And hero-worship gathers
A sacredness thro' years.
Oh ! for the blood-stained banners
That waved on many a field,
When Scotia's right was Scotia's might,
And every soldier was a knight
Of liberty revealed.

We'll reverence the story
Of the actions of our sires ;
The time, tho' old and hoary,
Keen interest inspires.

As sons and heirs of heroes,
Their fame shall be our shrine,
To nurse the glow true patriots know,
And should we face a threat'ning foe,
To fight like "auld lang syne."



*ON VIEWING THE WATT MEMORIAL
IN GREENOCK CEMETERY.**

SEE, where yon crude, unfashioned fabric stands,
The 'cumulative gift of many lands
And many sons, whose loyal ardour sent
The priceless offerings for a monument—
To whom? To Watt, the genius of the Clyde.
Then weep, Greenockians, in your humbled pride,
To think a memory of such world renown
Is thus dishonoured in his native town.
Is patriotism dead? Has virtue flown?
Has not his reflex glory ever shone
Within your hearts to urge you, out of shame,
To carve this pile to his immortal name,
And give it fitting site with generous hand—
That name a household word in every land?
Alas! and yet alas! that this is so.
Yet universal echo answers, No!
No reflex glory and no patriot's flame,
No virtuous interest in your son's great name!

* Being an unfashioned cairn of stones from all quarters of the earth.

Surely the Greenock of the present day
Feels not the fame of such nativity.
No other town upon th' unsavaged earth
Had heaven made such master of his birth,
But had been all too eager to bestow
Its homage and its duty years ago,
And felt an honest pride that he whose brain
Evolved the steam-pulsed engine for the gain
And progress of a world, had first found
The breath of life within their borough's bound.
Must future history put on record that
Greenock was never worthy of her Watt?
Then gird your loins, ye citizens, and rise
To this occasion ere the moment dies
For ever with you ; work with heart and hand,
Marking a site sufficient where shall stand
A noble finished monument to one
Who was and ever is your glorious son ;
Whose name shall live and ever live again
As long as progress paves the path of men.



MERRY GO MERRILY!

THE maid that is blythe is the maiden for me,
Merry go merrily, merry go merrily!
Bother blue blood and a long pedigree,
Merry go merry and free.
What's life in a tower with baronial spire,
If it never is brightened by Love's golden fire?
True love in a cottage is all I desire,
Merry go merry for me!

Chorus.

Merry go late in the gloaming,
Merry go lucky and free,
Merry go light in the morning,
Merry go merry for me !

Prosper the wight that can warble with me,
Merry go merrily, merry go merrily !
Prosper the maid that can ripple with glee,
Merry go merry and free.
Birds of the forest will mate on the wing,
Birds in the morning will up and will sing,
Making the hillsides with melody ring,
Merry go merry for me !

Nature blooms bright o'er the rig and the lea,
Merry go merrily, merry go merrily !
Sunbeams disport on the stormiest sea,
Merry go merry and free.
Thus we're exhorted to smile and be gay,
Banish dull care and sad sorrow away,
Laugh and grow fat is the rule of the day,
Merry go merry for me !

Life without love would be nothing to me,
Merry go merrily, merry go merrily !
Love without life is a sorrow to see,
Merry go merry and free.
Hearts were high strung by the will of the Wise,
Joyously set, and not sounding with sighs;
Woe to the world when merriment dies,
Merry go merry for me !

GOOD LUCK TO GOOD FELLOWS.

(Music by EMIL BERGER.)

WHEN Adam of old dug his garden,
And planted his young apple trees ;
When Eve with her scrim dolly-varden
Sat smiling and shelling green peas ;
Then they sipped the red wine, for no trouble had they,
And from morning till night of the long happy day,
In the fancy of love they would warble away,
While their song wafted sweet on the breeze.

Chorus.

Good luck to good fellows who gather together,
And join in a song or a glee ;
Here's to good liquor for ever and ever,
Hurrah, for good companie !

As mankind increased through the ages
They carried good nature along,
For history records on her pages
They were fond of a sip and a song ;
Alexander the Great with his warriors bold,
The Pharaohs, the Tarquins, the Cæsars of old,
Could unbend to good music and wine, we are told,
And rejoice with the jubilant throng.

Human nature's the same in the present,
Good fellowship doesn't decline,
We will meet and be socially pleasant,
And care to the mischief consign ;

The times that we live in, as far as times go,
Are better by far than the ancients could shew ;
And, what's to the point, we all very well know,
That we've far better music and wine.

Mirth and music can lighten our labours,
The wine cup in reason is right,
So we'll drink to our friends and our neighbours,
And join in the chorus to-night ;
The hour is our own in a social way,
Forgetting the worry and work of the day,
We'll quaff and we'll laugh with a hearty hurrah,
And puff at our Turkish delight.



IN THE DAY JOHN WENT
A MARRYING.

"TUNE—*In the days we went a gipsying.*"

In the day John went a marrying,
A long time ago,
The lasses grat wi' envy that
He hadna been their Jo ;
But in his plaid he row'd the maid
He woo'd wi' youthfu' e'en,
Syne on thro' life, as man and wife,
A canty pair they've been ;
Noo, at their silver wedding feast,
They're just the same, we know,

As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago,
As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago.

The orange bloom that decked the room
The nicht the knot was cast,
Has faded lang, and lies amang
The memories o' the past ;
But love weel-born, and better worn,
Can never tine, they say,
It blooms and blows for aye wi' those
Who court its company.
Noo at their silver wedding feast,
They're just the same, we know,
As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago,
As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago.

The cock may craw, the snaw may fa',
But friendship's fond embrace
Will nerve frien' John an' wife upon
The years o' coming grace ;
As man an' wife, an' blessed wi' life
Tae hirple doon the hill,
We'll hope and wish their guid success
In jorum and in gill ;
For at their silver wedding feast,
They're just the same, we know,
As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago,
As when they went a marrying,
A long time ago.

LADIES' SPATTS.

"WHAT ho ! what ho ! guid maister ?"

Cried a youth wi' sun-burnt broo.

"What ho ! what ho ! guid maister ?

I wad hae a word wi' you.

"I'm a simple farmer's plooman,

Leevin' far frae sea or shore ;

An' the fac' is, I, till noo, man,

Never city saw afore."

The old man looked case-hardened

As he eyed him with a glance,

That showed he was not verdant,

Nor addicted to romance.

"I know this city fairly,"

He replied, sedate and slow,

"For I tramp it late and early—

Pray what would you like to know ?"

Said the youth, "The country lasses

That I meet on country road,

As every Sunday passes,

Look weel dressed an' trigly shod.

"Tho' they boast nae watch nor bangles,

Nor eat wi' a silver spoon,

Still they're neat about the ankles

Wi' their leather boots an' shoon.

"Ye can tell it's boots they're wearing,
They're as natural as day,
An' it's no that I am caring,
But I'm o' a thinking way.

"As I travelled thro' your city,
Losh, I couldna help but see
That the woman folk were pretty,
But their feet looked strange tae me.

"Their boots and shoon were leather,
Judging frae the heels ahin' ;
But can ye tell me whether
They wear stocking-feet abune ?

"They were dressed up in the fashion,
Weel be-ribboned an' be-furred ;
But their feet were jist a caution,
Maist mysterious, on my word.

"Can ye tell me, my guid maister,
You that tramps the city street,
Can ye tell me, my guid maister,
What's the matter wi' their feet ?"

The old man coughed a second,
And he made a kind of grin ;
"Ah !" says he, "I've rightly reckoned,
It's a quandary you're in.

"Those mincing maids you meet with,
And their feet surswaddled so,
Say they only walk the street with
Such for comfort, don't you know ?

"They elect to call them gaiters
In their fashion-books ; but that's
A quirk for commentators,
I elect to call them spatts.

"So you'll tell your country cousins,
Quietly whisper in their ear,
What (altho' it's known to dozens)
Is supposed a secret here ;

"That the ladies, neat and dressy,
Who wear spatts upon the street,
Only do it, youngster, bless ye,
To conceal their ugly feet."



A BALLAD OF INCHCOLM ISLE.

OH, fresh and fair is the Firth of Forth,
As fair as a firth can be,
Where Inchcolm Isle in the sunbeams smile
Like a gem in a silver sea.

There the early breeze frae the German seas
Brings sap to the spreading shaw,
Spreads health the while owre Inchcolm Isle,
An' flowers roun' Inchcolm ha'.

There the limbs an' trunks o' ancient monks
At the midnight hour combine,
To rant an' reel, an' dance an' kneel
Roun' St. Columba's shrine.

Mess Robin sat wi' his broad-brimmed hat,
In Ladywell manse sat he,
An' he yearned for a home in far Inchcolm,
An' he sighed full three times three.

"Oh ! Ladywell Kirk is a goodly pile,"
With a saint-like voice he cries,
"But I sigh for a strand on some lonely land
Whar inspiration lies."

He has girt his clerical cloak in haste,
An' his powny o' pedigree,
He has girt his dame around the waist,
He has girt his sermons three.

Mess Robin has gane tae Inchcolm Isle
With fond intent to stay,
To purge the spot of the heretic lot,
And frighten the monks away.

He has crossed the brine, this bold divine,
And each faithful frien' applauds ;
He has crossed the tide, this goodly guide,
Himself and his household gods.

He has preached to the east, he has preached to the
He has preached to the ebbing shore ; [west,
He has preached each aisle of that monkish pile,
He has preached the island o'er.

Lord Moray he cam' frae his castle ha',
And an angry man was he ;
He called for his scribes an' his books of law,
And he summoned his lawyers three.

"Oh ! Inchcolm Isle is mine," he cried,
"I am baith laird an' grieve ;
An' who be ye doth here abide
Without my special leave ?"

"I am the 'Postle of Ladywell,
I ha'e travelled many a mile
Tae dream a dream by the salt sea stream,
Like John o' Patmos isle.

"I seek nae grace frae your Lordship's face,
But leave me as I am,
An' I'll redd your isle of monkish wile
By paraphrase an' psalm."

Then he clasped his sermons tae his breast,
His powny bridled he,
And he rode the shore full o'er and o'er,
Like the "Old Man of the Sea."

Lord Moray he swore by the monks of yore,
An' swore by the Cock o' the North,
He'd ha'e nae cant nor Ladywell rant
At Inchcolm on the Forth.

"So get ye hence frae St. Colme's Inch,
Wi' a' your goud an' gear,
While judges sit at the castle fit,
I vow ye bidena here."

Mess Robin saw that the word o' law
Was mightier than his name,
So he finally prayed an' then he made
A pilgrim's progress hame.

Mess Robin has gane wi' his tribe an' train,
For a lawfu' man is he,
He's gane like a lamb wi' his text an' psalm,
He's gane wi' his sermons three.

Noo in Ladywell kirk, at morn or mirk,
He sits by the corner stone ;
An' he thinks on the monks an' the dreams undreamt,
An' the visions o' good St. John.



THE GIDLED GABBART.

A GREENOCK BALLAD.

ERE the bell was boiled or the monkey hung
By the wise men o' the Port,
There were pious men in Greenock then
O' the auld established sort,

Wha meant to raise a hoose o' praise,
Such as the Covenant shields,
After the style o' a London pile—
“St Martin's in the Fields.”

The plans were made, the found was laid,
An' it grew in beauty there,
Till lang an' length wi' builded strength
Its shadow filled the square.

A' but the steeple tap was up—
(For so the story goes)—
They'd made a pause wi' it because
A difficulty rose.

Three worthy Bailies supervised—
The best the toon could choose—
But they fell out like mad about
The weather-vane to use.

Ane wanted this, ane wanted that,
To mark the north and south,
Till language rude was used that should
Ne'er leave an elder's mouth.

The landlord o' the "Tappit Hen,"
Wherein the wrangle rose,
Wi' canny courage ventured ben,
Of coorse to interpose.

Nae matter what the subject was,
A sermon or a gill,
He aye was referee, because
He ance had drove a quill.

"What's this," quo' he, "my cronies three,
That's raised your dander sae?
I didna think guid Hielan' drink
Wad operate that way."

"It's no the drink," the trio cried,
"We're neither fules nor fou;
We've disagreed, an' so we'll need
To leave the case wi' you.

He listened to the view each took
About a weather-vane;
Then thocht—for mony a solemn look
For wisdom's been mista'en.

"I'm no so sure," at last said he,
"But what ye're a' three richt,
Still three vanes there I think wad ne'er
Be tholed in broad daylight.

"If you'll let me decide the case,
I'll tell ye o' a scheme
To end the feud, because I should
Decide it ow're a dream.

"Last week we had a marriage here—
It was our dochter, Jess—
An' some bride's cake, or I mistake,
Is lying in the press.

"Into the future you can peep,
If but a piece you take.
Then mak' a wish, an' soundly sleep
Upon the wish an' cake.

"I'll gie ye some, an' weather-vanes
Shall be the wishfu' test ;
Then dream your fill. The morn I will
Decide which is the best.

"If my decision you'll obey,
A' wrangling must cease,
An', by my han', I'll surely stan'
Ye each a gill the piece."

They took his offer an' his cake,
Then hamewards bent their banes,
It may be said to gang to bed
An' dream o' weather-vanes.

Next morning wi' the early bird
The three dream-doited men
Appeared before the parlour door
Within the "Tappit Hen."

Wi' countenance baith wise an' wide
The landlord took his place,
To sit in judgment an' decide
On this momentous case.

But first they wat their thrapple gear
Wi' just a morning dram,
Then settled quietly doon to hear
The dream o' Bailie Tam.

An' he began, "I dreamed I was
Beside the Bay of Quick ;
My gun I'd brocht, because I thocht
A sea-gull I micht nick.

"When, losh ! I saw a herring hake
As big's a Hielan' stirk
Rise oot the sea, an' start to flee
Across to the Mid Kirk.

"An' as it darted thro' the air,
Abune my very heid,
I aimed a shot, and then I thought
It drappit doon stane deid.

"Ah ! guidsake me, it looked to be
A fish o' fearfu' fin,
For as it lay it seemed to ha'e
A Rab Roy tartan skin :

“ While stencilled on its under jaw,
What think ye I could read?
This simple sentence—‘ I am a’
The weather-vane you need.’

“ Well there an’ then, I woke and ate
The piece o’ wedding cake,
So I mantain the weather-vane
Should be a herring hake.’

The landlord hodged upon his seat,
And rocked his learned heid,
Then turning roon’ to Bailie Broon
He nudged him to proceed.

“ Weel, in my dream last nicht,” said he,
“ I stood in Carlsdyke Bay ;
The morning breeze birred thro’ the trees
In quite a wint’ry way.

“ When a’ at ance—lo, and behold !
A Cochin China cock,
Full ten feet high, wi’ eagle eye,
Burst thro’ the Greenock smoke.

“ On, on it cam’ wi’ swanking stride,
An’ aye its war-cry rose,
Until it stood wi’ pinions wide
Afore my very nose.

“ Its kaim hung like a mason’s brat
Adoon its near-han’ cheek,
An’ ere I kent what I was at,
The monster bird did speak :

“ ‘ You tak’ me for your weather-vane,
I’ll face the steeple spire,
An’ kirk-gaun folk, or I’m mista’en,
Nae better will desire.

“ ‘ But just ye buckle tae my wing
Wi’ a’ your micht, and then
I’ll gie a flap owre-bye and drap
Beside the “Tappit Hen.” ’

“ I grupp’d the wing, an’ as it rose
High up into the air,
I felt I was a wechty man,
But aye I held the mair.

“ At that I woke wi’ sudden shock,
An’ sure as I must dee,
My wife was white wi’ mortal fright,
Quite pitifu’ tae see.

“ She heard my dream, but it wad seem
She couldna’ see the point,
For thro’ it a’ I’d tried tae draw
Her shouther oot o’ joint.

“ Nae matter, it appeared tae me,
Soon after I awoke,
The weather-vane should surely be
A Cochin-China cock.”

The landlord raised his sonsy arm,
To hide a gatherin’ grin,
Then let it drap on Bailie Barm,
An’ bade him to begin.

- Thus urged, the Bailie closed his een,
Then ope'd his mouth and spake :
“ I dreamt na of a cock, my frien',
Far less a herrin' hake.
- “ Thro' mine a veesion I espy
That troubles me full sore,
I actually thocht that I
Had dee't the week afore.
- “ I sat upon the Cardross bank,
The tide far oot at that,
While mussels roun' me gaped and clank,
As big's your Sunday hat.
- “ Auld Greenock in the distance rocked
Like vessel in a storm ;
I felt my heid, and learned indeed
That I was void o' form.
- “ I rubbed my een an' pu'd my chin,
I gie'd my nose a thraw,
But it was a' in vain—I could
Na find mysel' at a'.
- “ My state o' mind I canna tell,
I trembled through an' through,
Because, thinks I unto mysel',
I am a speerit noo.
- “ No lang had I to glower an' glum,
For on the drappin' tide
I saw a gilded gabbart come
Asailing doon the Clyde.

“The worthy Provost pu’d the stroke,
The Toon-Clerk steered the craft,
While a’ the Greenock Coouncil folk
Were in it fore and aft.

“‘Ahoy! ahoy! good boat, ahoy!’
I hailed them floating past;
My shouts prevailed, they stopped and nailed
Their colours to the mast.

“‘Whar are ye bound?’ I questioned them;
‘I’ll pilot ye, mayhap;’
Wi’ eerie roar they cried ‘We’re for
The Mid Kirk steeple tap.

“‘You’ll come on board, we can afford
An oar for you as well;
For you can see, in fac’, that we
Are speerits like yoursel.’

“I seemed tae spring amang the lot,
An’ gaed on the lookoot;
Then by some cantrip I’ve forgot,
I thocht I steered the bonnie boat
Clean up a waterspoot.

“We lichted on the steeple top,
An’ as the roll was called,
’Twixt heaven an’ earth we hung an’ swung
Like Mahomet of auld.

“I liked the situation fine
Abune the Greenock smoke;
I looked an’ marvelled in my min’,
An’ marvelling I awoke.

" I may be wrang, but, fegs, I could
Na change my mind, ye see ;
The weather-vane, I'm certain, should
A gilded gabbart be."

The landlord sat in thocht awhile,
Then smoothed his double chin ;
" Your dreams ha'e a' a different style,"
Quoth he. " So to begin :

" There's nae mistake, a herrin' hake
Wad capitally sort,
Had Greenock put her foremost foot
To be a fishin' port.

" If fish was a' that landed here,
The toon wad be ill-off ;
The dream to suit should be about
A sugar pan or loaf.

" An' as for giant Cochin cocks
Or hens, the breed we hae
Are big an' tough, an' learned enough
For a' the eggs they lay.

" So, Bailie Barm, your version seems
(As far as I've pretence)
Tae hae among the threesome dreams
Some glint o' common sense.

" A gilded gabbart's no sae bad,
Since ships come here from sea ;
It's possible to make, an wad
Gey ornamental be.

“But ane that wad contain the squad,
Supposing ye were deid,
Nae gabbart built could haud them ; it’s
A cemetery ye’d need.

“If ye then mak’ a gabbart vane,
An’ perch it in the air,
I hae a plan whereby I can
Immortalise you there.

“It should be built o’ copper rare,
For it will stan’ the best ;
If pintled weel, it’s sure tae wheel
Tae north, south, east, and west.

“Then write your names on parchment sheet,
Wi’ virtues manifold,
An’ seal an’ souther a’ complete
Within the gabbart’s hold.

“So future generations can
Assure themsel’s that there
Your names are lying quieter than
Your souls may be elsewhere.

“Then gild the gabbart roun’ aboot,
An’ surely you’ll agree
The Bailie’s dream’s been carried oot
As near as it can be.”

The plan was guid, an’ so they did
Adopt the landlord’s hint ;
They built a copper gabbart, and
Put a’ their signums in’t.

So it was placed, and lang has graced
That kirk whar guid folks pray ;
For years it's spun, and marks the wun'
Until this very day.



*THE CLYDE MADE GLASGOW, AND
GLASGOW MADE THE CLYDE.*

As we mark the path of progress leading up and ever on,
We can well contrast the present with the buried and bygone,
Ere this century of science threw its penetrating beam,
When St. Mungo was a village, and the Clyde was but a
stream,

And appreciate the adage with a certain native pride,
That the Clyde made Glasgow, and Glasgow made the Clyde.

Then the thought so deep and pregnant never entered
mind of man,

What a mighty future woo'd her as the tires of traffic ran,
That the age would work such marvel, or the air with
action fill,

As she spread her potent compass over each suburban hill,
Wedded in the lists of nature to the silent sea-borne tide,
For the Clyde made Glasgow, and Glasgow made the Clyde.

Now the hum and hark of business fills the palpitating air,
And the freighted hulls of commerce to her busy wharves
repair

With the riches of the Orient, with the harvest of the West,
 In their hundreds and their thousands, canvas-crowned or
 engine-prest,
 Bearing hence industrial products to the nations far and
 wide ;
 For the Clyde made Glasgow, and Glasgow made the Clyde.

As the Second City laurelled in these piping times of peace,
 She maintains her proud pre-eminence, and may it still
 increase !
 Ever on and ever upwards through the mist of marching
 years,
 Her guiding sons and servants ever worthy in their spheres.
 The ocean is her glory whereupon her fortunes ride,
 For the Clyde made Glasgow, and Glasgow made the Clyde.



WILL YE COME WI' ME, MY MARY?

A DUET.

(*Music by the Author.*)

HE.

WILL you come wi' me, my Mary, will ye come to Castlecary?
 I've a cottage and a garden on the brae,
 That I've biggit richt an' rarely, an' I've diggit late an' early,
 Planting southerwood for you to pu' some day.

SHE.

Oh! why should I gang wi' ye? Archie, lad, I'm naething to ye;
 Your cottage and your garden's no for me.

BOTH.

Gowden is the wooing when it's Providence's doing,
 Wi' my hey hinny hark-a-honey bee !

HE.

Let me whisper ye, my Mary, you have ever been the fairy
That's presided owre my fancy an' my fate ;
I'm awkward at the wooin', an' I'm backward at the booin',
But I'm just as true an' honest as I'm blate.

SHE.

Till noo ye ne'er made mention, Archie lad, o' sic intention.
An' mony a foot we've wandered owre the lea.

BOTH.

Gowden is the wooing when it's Providence's doing,
Wi' my hey hinny hark-a-honey bee !

HE.

That is true for you, my Mary, tho' my manner has been chary,
My love has got the greater a' the same ; [showin',
There's a season for love's growin', an' there's reason for the
When a lassie lo'es fu' weel to change her name.

SHE.

I never said I wouldna, Archie lad, because I couldna,
But there's something you've forgotten, I can see.

BOTH.

Gowden is the wooing when it's Providence's doing,
Wi' my hey hinny hark-a-honey bee !

HE.

What must I do, my Mary? you will find na me contrary,
My siller and my heart are baith your ain ;
You've only just to name it, an' I fondly will proclaim it,
As guid as dune before we've further gane.

SHE.

Ask faither, then, an' mither, Archie lad, an' tell me whether
They'd hae ye for a braw gudeman tae me.

BOTH.

Gowden is the wooing when it's Providence's doing,
Wi' my hey hinny hark-a-honey bee !

HE.

If that is a', my Mary, ye shall come to Castlecary,
Your faither and your mither's kent langsyne ;
I fear I've been transgressing, but I speer't an' got their
So, Mary, I am yours, an' you are mine. [blessing,

SHE.

Weel, if they baith ha'e kent it, Archie lad, an' ha'e consentit,
I'll do my best your ain guidwife to be.

BOTH.

Gowden is the wooing when it's Providence's doing,
Wi' my hey hinny hark-a-honey bee !



THE OVERSEA WHISPER.

(Music by the Author.)

THE spirit of love o'er the ocean sped,
To the homeward ship with her canvas spread,
Where a sailor lad at the tall mast-head
Sat dreamily rocking and swaig ;

It lit up his soul with a happy ray,
He thought on the lass that was far away,
And he heard those words breathing constancy,
That the oversea whisper was saying—

Chorus.

Oh ! sailor, a maid's bright eyes
Are beaming a beautiful blue ;
With love unabating,
She's wistfully waiting,
She's wistfully waiting for you.

The watery waste wore a deepening hue
As it spread around to its pensive view ;
His heart was heavy, for well he knew
The distance was long and dreary.
He listened, and gazed at the southern sky,
The air was soft as a maiden's sigh,
And he fancied an angel was hovering nigh,
A-singing this song of his dearie—

Oh ! sailor, &c.

That spirit of love woo'd the sailor there,
Till the night's dark mantle spread everywhere,
Then away it sped through the silent air,
For the spirit of love is away ;
He has left his post as the night watch nears,
Yet ever and ever he thinks he hears
That oversea whisper within his ears,
Like the voice of a gentle fairy—

Oh ! sailor, &c.

*THE GOOD QUEEN OF OUR LAND.**

THE Royal Standard floats in state
O'er Blythswood's honoured walls ;
Sir Archibald stands at the mansion gate,
And his retinue line the halls.
"Oh ! why, Sir Archibald, stand ye there ?"
Cried a minstrel with staff in hand ;
"I wait to greet with a welcome meet
The good Queen of our land.

"To Blythswood Ha' she comes to-day,
All for 'St. Mungo's fair,'
And welcome waits Her Majesty
From the loyal thousands there.
So Blythswood Ha' is busk and braw,
And loyal lieges stand
To hail her here with Scottish cheer,
The good Queen of our land."

"Sir Knight," the aged minstrel said,
And his eye beamed soft and mild,
"Full three score years and five have fled
Since I saw her first, a child.
Bright as the laughing sunbeam she
Clung to her guardian's hand,
And heaven had sealed her then to be
The good Queen of our land.

"Again I saw her, noble Knight,
Blushing in beauty's pride,

* Written on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit to Glasgow Exhibition.

A bride—a monarch in her right,
With Albert by her side.
I blessed them in my heart that day,
When joined in wedlock's band,
For I knew that she would prove to be
The good Queen of our land."

"Once more, Sir Knight, I saw her head
Bowed down with grief and woe,
And then my very bosom bled
That heaven ordained it so.
Still like a Queen, a Christian Queen,
So noble and so grand,
With sorrowing brow she stood as now
The good Queen of our land."

The minstrel's voice grew sad and low,
His bosom heaved a sigh,
His snow-white locks waved to and fro,
And the salt-tear dimmed his eye.
"Thank God, Sir Archibald," he cried,
"I'm spared once more to stand,
Her face to see, the last for me,
The good Queen of our land."

And Blythwood Ha' is filled with state,
And Blythwood Ha' is fair,
Sir Archibald stands at the mansion gate
With his sweet lady there.
"She comes, she comes," the thousands shout,
And the minstrel waves his hand ;
Heaven guide her will, God bless her still,
The good Queen of our land."

GLASGOW:

JOHN HORN, PRINTER, 42 ARGYLE STREET

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